

**Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, Colorado 81401**

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WILD AND SCENIC RIVER SUITABILITY REPORT

for the BLM **Uncompahgre Planning Area**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM OR ABBREVIATION	COMPLETE PHRASE
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ATV	all-terrain vehicle
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
cfs	cubic feet per second (water flow measurement)
CNHP	Colorado Natural Heritage Program
CWCB	Colorado Water Conservation Board
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
NCA	National Conservation Area
NWSRS	National Wild and Scenic River System
ORV	Outstandingly Remarkable Value
RMP	Resource Management Plan
ROW	Right-of-Way
T/R/Sec	Township/Range/Section (Public Land Survey System)
UFO	Uncompahgre Field Office
USFS	United States Forest Service
WSA	Wilderness Study Area
WSR	Wild and Scenic Rivers
WSR Act	Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

A. INTRODUCTION

This report presents an analysis of and recommendations regarding the suitability of 28 eligible river segments within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Uncompahgre Planning Area (planning area) for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System (NWSRS). An 11.88-mile segment of the Dolores River within the planning area was identified as eligible in the San Juan Public Lands Draft Land Management Plan and is among the 28 segments evaluated for this report.

After considering information, comments, and recommendations from BLM resource staff, the BLM Southwest Resource Advisory Council, cooperating agencies, stakeholder groups, landowners, and other interested parties, the BLM identified 16 of the 28 segments as suitable for NWSRS consideration. The findings are used to develop the preferred alternative for the Uncompahgre Resource Management Plan (RMP) and to make NWSRS recommendations to Congress.

THE STUDY AREA

The United States Department of the Interior BLM Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) manages approximately 880,000 acres of public land in Delta, Mesa, Montrose, Gunnison, Ouray, and San Miguel counties in southwestern Colorado. The planning area for the RMP consists of over 675,000 acres of BLM-administered public land within the UFO, excluding the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (NCA) and the Dominguez-Escalante NCA, which operate under separate RMPs.

The BLM completed an evaluation of 174 river segments in the planning area and released the ***Final Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report for the BLM Uncompahgre Planning Area*** on July 15, 2010. The report identifies 34 segments as eligible for inclusion in the NWSRS, including six segments within the UFO portion of the Dominguez-Escalante NCA. The following segments will be evaluated for suitability during development of the Dominguez-Escalante NCA RMP and are not included in this report:

- Cottonwood Creek
- Dry Fork Escalante Creek, Segment 2
- Escalante Creek, Segment 1
- Escalante Creek, Segment 2
- Gunnison River, Segment 3
- Rose Creek

B. WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY PROCESS

Section 5(d) (1) of the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSR Act) requires federal agencies to evaluate potential wild and scenic rivers when preparing resource management plans: “In all planning for the use and development of water and related land resources, consideration shall be given by all federal agencies involved to potential national wild, scenic, and recreational river areas.”

As shown in the flowchart below, the Wild and Scenic River (WSR) study process consists of evaluating segments for **eligibility** and **suitability**. Both studies are conducted in accordance with the WSR Act, BLM Manual 8351 and the recently revised BLM Manual 6400: *Wild and Scenic Rivers—Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management* (1992 and 2012), and *The Wild and Scenic River Study Process Technical Report* (1999) issued by the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council.

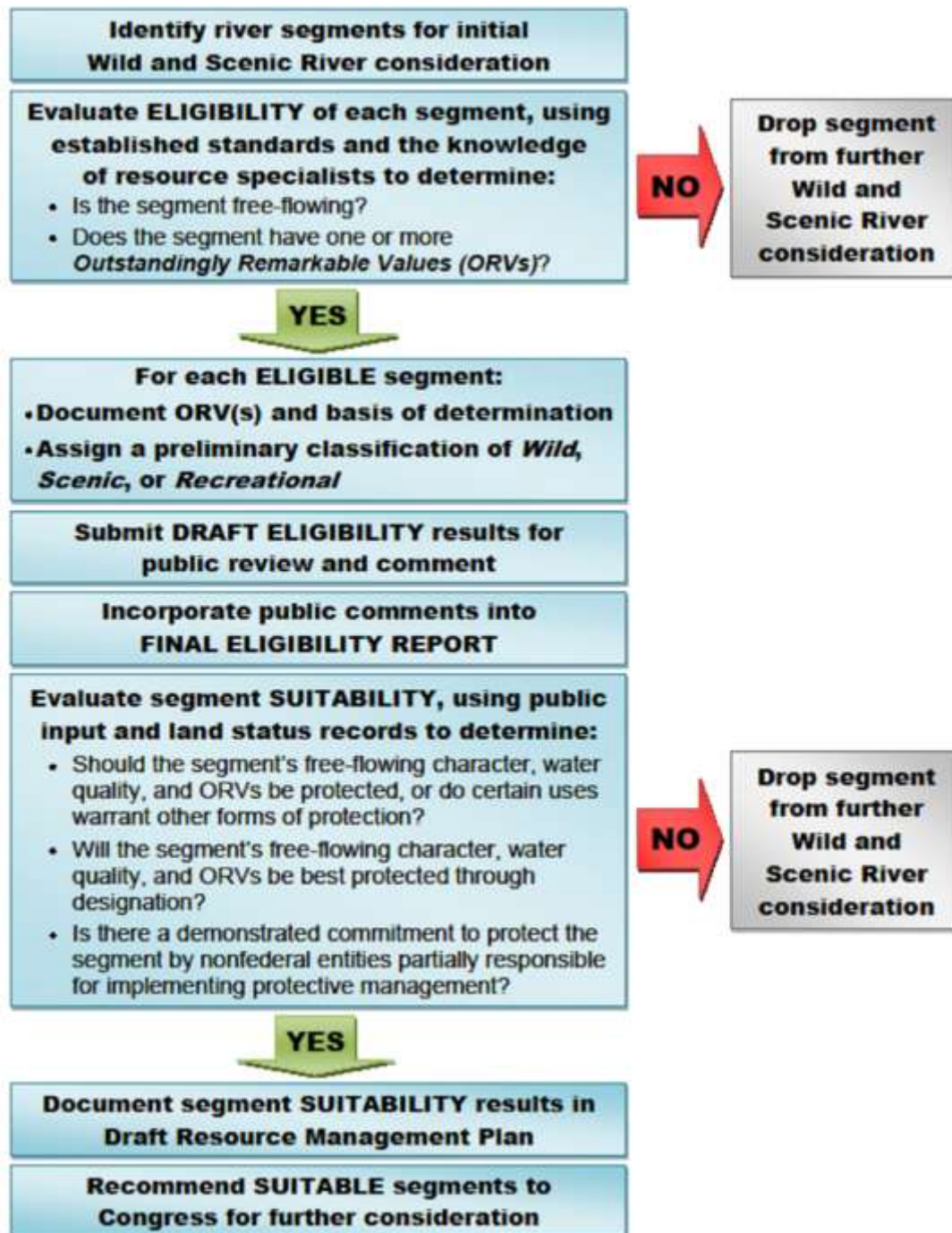


FIGURE I - WSR STUDY PROCESS FLOWCHART

ELIGIBILITY ANALYSIS

FIELD SURVEYS

Extensive field inventories were conducted throughout the planning area between 2006 and 2009. An interdisciplinary team of BLM employees identified 174 river and stream segments from within seven hydrologic units.

TABLE 1 - ELIGIBLE SEGMENTS BY HYDROLOGIC UNIT

HYDROLOGIC UNIT	ELIGIBLE SEGMENTS
Upper Gunnison	0
Lower Gunnison	5
Uncompahgre	0
North Fork of the Gunnison	2
San Miguel	11
Lower Dolores	2
Upper Dolores ¹	8
TOTAL SEGMENTS	28

¹Includes one reach of the Dolores River determined to be eligible in the San Juan Public Lands Draft Land Management Plan.

ANALYSIS

The team evaluated each segment to determine whether it meets the two criteria required for NWSRS eligibility: the stream (1) is free-flowing and (2) possesses any of several outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) adopted and specifically tailored for application within the planning area prior to the assessment. As shown in Table 1 above, twenty-eight planning area segments within five hydrologic units were found to possess the eligibility criteria. In addition, one Upper Dolores segment within the planning area was identified as eligible in the San Juan Public Lands Draft Land Management Plan. No eligible segments were identified within either the Upper Gunnison or Uncompahgre hydrologic units.

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

While values must be river-related, eligible ORVs may be scenic, recreational, geologic, fish, wildlife, cultural, historic, vegetation, or other similar value (such as paleontological). In addition, in order to be considered outstandingly remarkable, a value must be unique, rare, or exemplary, as well as significant within a defined region of comparison.

Regions of Comparison

A region of comparison is used to compare the special values for which a river is being considered against comparable elements within a defined geographic area. The area, region, or scale used for comparison is not fixed, and should be that which best serves as a basis for meaningful analysis—it might vary, depending on the value being considered. The scale of a region could consist of a portion of a state or other appropriately scaled geographic area or hydrologic unit (Interagency WSR Coordinating Council 1999).

The following standards and regions of comparison for each ORV category were developed by UFO resource specialists, and used to evaluate the WSR eligibility of UFO rivers:

I. SCENIC

Standard - The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors must result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions within the geographic region. The BLM Visual Resource Inventory Handbook (H8410-1) may be used to assess visual quality and evaluate the extent to which development impacts an area's scenic values. The area must have a Scenic Quality Classification of A, as defined in H8410-1. When analyzing scenic values, additional factors such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and length of time negative intrusions are viewed may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river segment length and not common to other rivers in the geographic region.

Region of Comparison - The landscape has a Scenic Quality Classification of A within either the Southern Rockies or Colorado Plateau ecologic region.

2. RECREATIONAL

Standard - Recreational opportunities are or have the potential to be unusual enough to attract visitors to the geographic region. Visitors are willing to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes. Recreation-related opportunities could include, but are not be limited to, sightseeing, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, fishing, hunting, and boating. Interpretive opportunities may be exceptional and attract or have the potential to attract visitors from outside the geographic area. The river may provide or have the potential to provide settings for national or regional commercial usage or competitive events. In addition, the river may be eligible if it is determined to provide a critically important regional recreation opportunity, or be a significant component of a regional recreation opportunity spectrum setting.

Region of Comparison - The area possesses recreational opportunities popular enough to attract visitors from throughout or beyond the state of Colorado, and/or that are unique or rare within either the Southern Rockies or Colorado Plateau ecologic region. Opportunities could include Gold Medal fisheries, rafting, and others.

3. GEOLOGIC

Standard - The river or the area within the river corridor contains one or more examples of a geologic feature, process, or phenomenon that is rare, unusual, or unique to the geographic region. The feature or features may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a textbook example and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features (erosional, volcanic, glacial, and other geologic structures).

Region of Comparison - The feature is unique or rare within either the Southern Rockies or Colorado Plateau ecologic region.

4. FISH

Standard - Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations or habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions.

a) Populations: The river is nationally or regionally one of the top producers of resident, indigenous, and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance may be the presence of wild or unique stocks, or populations of Colorado State and/or federally listed or candidate threatened and endangered species.

b) Habitat: The river provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region. Of particular significance is habitat for Colorado State and/or federally listed or candidate threatened and endangered species.

Region of Comparison - Distribution of native species across their entire range, within either the Southern Rockies or Colorado Plateau ecologic region.

5. WILDLIFE

Standard - Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either wildlife populations or habitat, or a combination of these conditions.

a) Populations: The river or area within the river corridor contains nationally or regionally important populations of resident or indigenous wildlife species dependent on the river environment. Of particular significance may be species considered to be unique or populations of Colorado State and/or federally listed or candidate threatened and endangered species.

b) Habitat: The river or area within the river corridor provides exceptionally high quality, occupied habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, or may provide a unique or critical habitat link for special status species known to occur in the area. Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met.

Region of Comparison - Distribution of native species across their entire range, within either the Southern Rockies or Colorado Plateau ecologic region.

6. CULTURAL

Standard - The river or area within the river corridor contains one or more sites where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must be rare, have unusual characteristics, or exceptional human interest values. Sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory, may be rare, may represent an area where culture or cultural period was first identified and described, may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups, or may have been used by cultural groups for rare, sacred, tribal, or spiritual purposes.

Region of Comparison - A site that is on, or could be eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

TABLE 2 - NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION CRITERIA

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:	
CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
A	Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
B	Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past
C	Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
D	Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory

7. HISTORIC

Standard - The river or area within the corridor contains one or more sites or features associated with a significant event, person, or cultural activity of the past that was rare or unusual in the region. Historic and/or Native American sites or features in most cases are 50 years old or older. Sites or features listed in, or eligible for inclusion in, the NRHP may be of particular significance.

Region of Comparison - A site that is unique or rare within the state of Colorado, and is on or could be eligible for the NRHP (as shown in Table 2).

8. VEGETATION

Standard - The river or stream segment supports a riparian vegetation community that is a superior occurrence or is rare on a global basis:

a) Superior occurrence: For this standard, a superior community is defined as having received an Element Occurrence Ranking of A by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). An A ranking denotes that a community has excellent estimated ecological integrity based on size, condition, and landscape context.

b) Rare on a global basis: For this standard, rareness is defined as a ranking of G1 or G2 (as determined by CNHP and described in Table 3).

Riparian vegetation that is located in a Potential Conservation Area (as determined by CNHP) has enhanced value because it has been identified as highly important for conserving regional and global biodiversity.

Region of Comparison - The river or area within the river corridor provides exceptional vegetative species or communities of significance within either the Southern Rockies or Colorado Plateau ecologic region. Consideration should be given to habitats and rare plants identified by CNHP as being of global importance (such as exceptional riparian areas and hanging gardens).

The element imperilment ranks shown in the table below are assigned in terms of an element's imperilment over its entire range (its Global-rank or G-rank):

TABLE 3 - COLORADO NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM ELEMENT IMPERILMENT RANKS

RANK	DESCRIPTION
G1	Critically imperiled globally because of rarity (5 or fewer occurrences in the world or 1,000 or fewer individuals), or because some factor of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extinction.
G2	Imperiled globally because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences or 1,000 to 3,000 individuals), or because other factors demonstrably make it very vulnerable to extinction throughout its range.
G3	Vulnerable through its range or found locally in a restricted range (21 to 100 occurrences or 3,000 to 10,000 individuals).
G4	Apparently secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery. Usually more than 100 occurrences and 10,000 individuals.
G5	Demonstrably secure globally, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.

9. OTHER SIMILAR VALUES

Standard - While no specific evaluation guidelines have been established for the "other similar values" category, additional values deemed relevant to the eligibility of the river segment should be considered in a manner consistent with the foregoing guidance including, but not limited to, paleontologic, and scientific study opportunities.

Region of Comparison - Unique or rare within the Southern Rockies or Colorado Plateau ecologic region. For paleontological resources, these regions would be defined based on geological associations.

PRELIMINARY CLASSIFICATION

The eligible segments were then assigned a preliminary classification of **wild, scenic, or recreational** based upon the amount of access to, and level of shoreline and water resource development within, the corridor, as defined in the WSR Act.

For a complete description of the segments analyzed and methods used, the eligibility report is available for review at the Montrose Public Lands Center in Montrose, Colorado and on the UFO Wild and Scenic River Studies webpage at:

http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo/wild_and_scenic_river.html.

SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

During the suitability process, the BLM weighed protective measures for eligible river segments and the corresponding corridor in relation to current and potential identified uses. Possible environmental and economic consequences of, management issues resulting from, and reasonable alternatives to WSR designation were considered. Preliminary segment boundaries and classifications were reevaluated in response to public input. Geographic information systems data was recalculated, at times resulting in modified segment lengths and land ownership measures.

The portions of the eligible stream segment that are not included within the suitable stream segment boundaries, both in terms of stream miles and acreage within the eligible stream corridor, are found to be not suitable.

According to the Interagency WSR Coordinating Council (1999), a suitability evaluation should address three primary considerations:

- Should the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected, or are one or more other uses important enough to warrant doing otherwise?
- Will the river's free-flowing character, water quality, and ORVs be protected through designation? Is designation the best method for protecting the river corridor? In answering these questions, the benefits and impacts of WSR designation must be evaluated and alternative protection methods considered.
- Is there a demonstrated commitment to protect the river by any nonfederal entities partially responsible for implementing protective management?

UFO SUITABILITY CRITERIA

Criteria used to evaluate eligible planning area segments for suitability were derived from BLM Manual 8351, *Wild and Scenic Rivers - Policy and Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management* (1992), as well as from guidelines issued by the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (1999). Suitability criteria in the recently revised 8351 manual (now BLM

Manual 6400 [2012]) were also considered. The following suitability criteria were formulated to elicit focused responses from BLM staff and the public useful in analyzing individual segments:

1. Characteristics which might or might not qualify this segment for WSR designation, including this segment's contribution to the integrity of a river system or basin.
2. Known federal, state, regional, tribal, local, or other public interests in designation or non-designation.
3. ORVs that could be affected by designation or non-designation.
4. Status of land and mineral ownership for this segment and the associated river corridor, including historical or existing rights that could be adversely affected by designation or lack of designation.
5. Compatibility or incompatibility of designation with current land and water uses and development.
6. Reasonably foreseeable potential land and water development and uses that could be affected by designation.
7. Ability to manage and protect this segment as a WSR, including any existing and potential mechanisms for protecting this segment's ORVs other than WSR designation.
8. Consistency of designation with other BLM plans, programs, and policies and regional objectives.
9. Issues that might make administering this segment difficult.
10. Adequacy of local zoning and other land use controls and ability of state/local government to manage and protect this segment's ORVs on nonfederal lands.

BLM INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM

For each eligible segment, an interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists (listed on page 168) compiled information from within their particular area(s) of expertise. The specialists met as a group to evaluate the segments in relation to the suitability criteria. Following their preliminary review, the team collected additional data to fill information gaps.

INFORMATION SOURCES

BLM staff utilized a variety of resources to analyze and make recommendations for each segment, including:

- Geographic Information Systems data
- U.S. Geological Survey stream gauge data and minerals maps
- Land status maps
- State and federal agency agreements and management plans
- Local and county government land use plans and zoning documents

Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) project data
 Published books and reports
 River guides
 Water rights tabulations

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The suitability comment period was announced through a press release issued July 15, 2010. Letters inviting participation and requesting input regarding eligible segments were mailed to potential interested parties. Response forms were disseminated at public meetings and via mail and email, and available through the UFO Wild and Scenic River Studies webpage.

Public Comments

The UFO received hundreds of forms and letters containing unique comments, as well as numerous form letters. Substantive comments received during the formal suitability comment period (ending August 20, 2010) were summarized by segment and suitability criteria and considered in the suitability analysis. Comments received during the stakeholder process ending January 24, 2011 were also considered when they provided new information. In addition, comments received during the eligibility period that pertained more closely to suitability were included. Eligibility-related comments were not considered during the suitability analysis. Original comments are on file at the UFO administrative headquarters in Montrose, Colorado.

Stakeholder Groups

Input from public stakeholder groups was critical in evaluating the suitability of each segment. Separate stakeholder processes were initiated for segments in the Gunnison River Basin and those in the Dolores and San Miguel river basins. Stakeholder groups held public meetings during late 2010 and early 2011. BLM staff participated in the meetings to provide information and data and answer questions pertaining to the WSR process and specific segments, but did not offer recommendations. Results of both stakeholder processes were forwarded to the BLM for consideration.

Gunnison Basin Stakeholder Process

The Gunnison Basin stakeholder process was initiated by the Colorado River Water Conservation District. The stakeholder group contracted with a team of co-facilitators and held nine public meetings pertaining to Gunnison Basin segments outside of the Dominguez-Escalante NCA. The stakeholder group was unable to reach a consensus and two sets of recommendations were forwarded to the BLM for consideration.

Dolores and San Miguel Basin Stakeholder Process

The Dolores-San Miguel process was coordinated by the RMP Subgroup for the Southwest Resource Advisory Council (SWRAC). The subgroup contracted with a facilitator early in the process and held ten public meetings. In addition, the subgroup opened a second public comment period to gather additional suitability input.

The subgroup considered BLM analysis and public input and developed recommendations for each of the Dolores-San Miguel segments. The full BLM Colorado SWRAC reviewed and adopted the

subgroup recommendations at the Colorado Statewide Resource Advisory Council meeting held on February 25, 2011.

Cooperating and Other Public Agency Input

State and federal agencies were invited to participate as cooperating agencies in the RMP process, providing information and reviewing preliminary findings during and between monthly meetings. Agencies opting not to serve as cooperating agencies provided input through correspondence and during public meetings.

ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Results of the suitability analysis were used to formulate a range of alternatives for the Draft RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The range of alternatives consists of a no action alternative that would maintain all rivers at the eligible stage, an alternative that would find all eligible rivers suitable, an alternative that would find all segments not suitable, and an alternative that would find some or portions of some eligible rivers suitable. Following publication of the Draft RMP/EIS, the public will have 90 days to comment on the draft suitability determinations. The final suitability determinations will be documented in the Approved RMP/Record of Decision. Segments found not suitable will be dropped from further consideration and revert to management according to objectives and prescriptions in the RMP.

NWSRS CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION

Neither the suitability evaluation nor the RMP planning process result in designation of a river segment as part of the NWSRS. Following completion of the Uncompahgre RMP, the findings are forwarded to Congress for consideration. Congress (or the Secretary of the Interior upon application by a state governor) has the final authority to designate waterways. Members of Congress craft the legislative language for designated segments and develop water protection strategies and measures in support of the WSR Act.

INTERIM MANAGEMENT OF SUITABLE SEGMENTS

The WSR Act and BLM guidelines require the BLM to develop and implement interim management to protect the free-flowing nature, water quality, ORVs, and recommended classification of suitable segments until Congress takes formal action regarding NWSRS designation. Table 4 on page 19 provides interim guidelines for managing suitable rivers, as adapted by the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council from the WSR Act. Once final determinations have been made, the BLM will draft protective management measures for each suitable segment.

While congressionally authorized study rivers are protected under the WSR Act, agency-identified rivers receive protection through other authorities, including the National Environmental Policy Act, the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. For example, potential effects on the free-flowing condition, water quality, and ORVs of eligible river segments would be considered when proposing federal or federally permitted actions subject to the National Environmental Policy Act.

Following release of the Approved RMP/Record of Decision, suitable segments will be managed to maintain their free-flowing character and ORVs in support of the selected alternative until designated or released from consideration by Congress.

TABLE 4 - INTERIM PROTECTION FOR SUITABLE SEGMENTS

ISSUE	PROTECTION UNDER SUITABLE DESIGNATION
Study Boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corridor width is generally one-quarter mile from ordinary high water mark on both sides of active channel • Boundary may include adjacent areas needed to protect identified values
Preliminary Classification WSR Act Section (2b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild, Scenic, and Recreational classes as defined by statute (classification criteria described in Interagency Guidelines) • Manage segment at recommended classification
Study Report Review Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice of study report/Draft EIS published in <i>Federal Register</i> • Comments/responses from federal, state, and local agencies, and public included in study report/Final EIS transmitted to President and Congress
Private Land: • Administration • Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affects private land uses only through voluntary partnerships with state/local governments and landowners • No regulatory authority over private land • ¹Evaluation of local zoning and land use control adequacy is typically a component of suitability determination • BLM has no authority to acquire interest in land under WSR Act prior to designation
Water Resources Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River's free-flowing condition protected to the extent of other BLM authorities and not under the WSR Act
Land Disposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency discretion to retain lands within river corridor in federal ownership
Mining and Mineral Leasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect free flow, water quality, and ORVs through other BLM authorities
Actions of Other Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affect actions of other agencies through voluntary partnerships
Protect Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No regulatory authority conferred by WSR Act; agency protects through other authorities • ²Section 11(b)(1): Limited financial or other assistance to encourage participation in acquisition, protection, and management of river resources

ISSUE	PROTECTION UNDER SUITABLE DESIGNATION
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¹Agency-identified study rivers that include private land typically require an evaluation of existing state and local land use controls and the willingness of state and local governments to protect river values.

²Section 11(b)1 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture, or the head of any other federal agency to provide for “limited financial or other assistance to encourage participation in the acquisition, protection, and management of river resources.” This authority “applies within or outside a federally administered area and applies to rivers which are components of the NWSRS and to other rivers.” Recipients of federal assistance include states or their political subdivisions, landowners, private organizations, or individuals. Examples of assistance under this section include riparian restorations, riparian fencing to protect water quality and riparian vegetation, and vegetative screening to enhance scenery and/or the recreation experience.

Source: Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (1999)

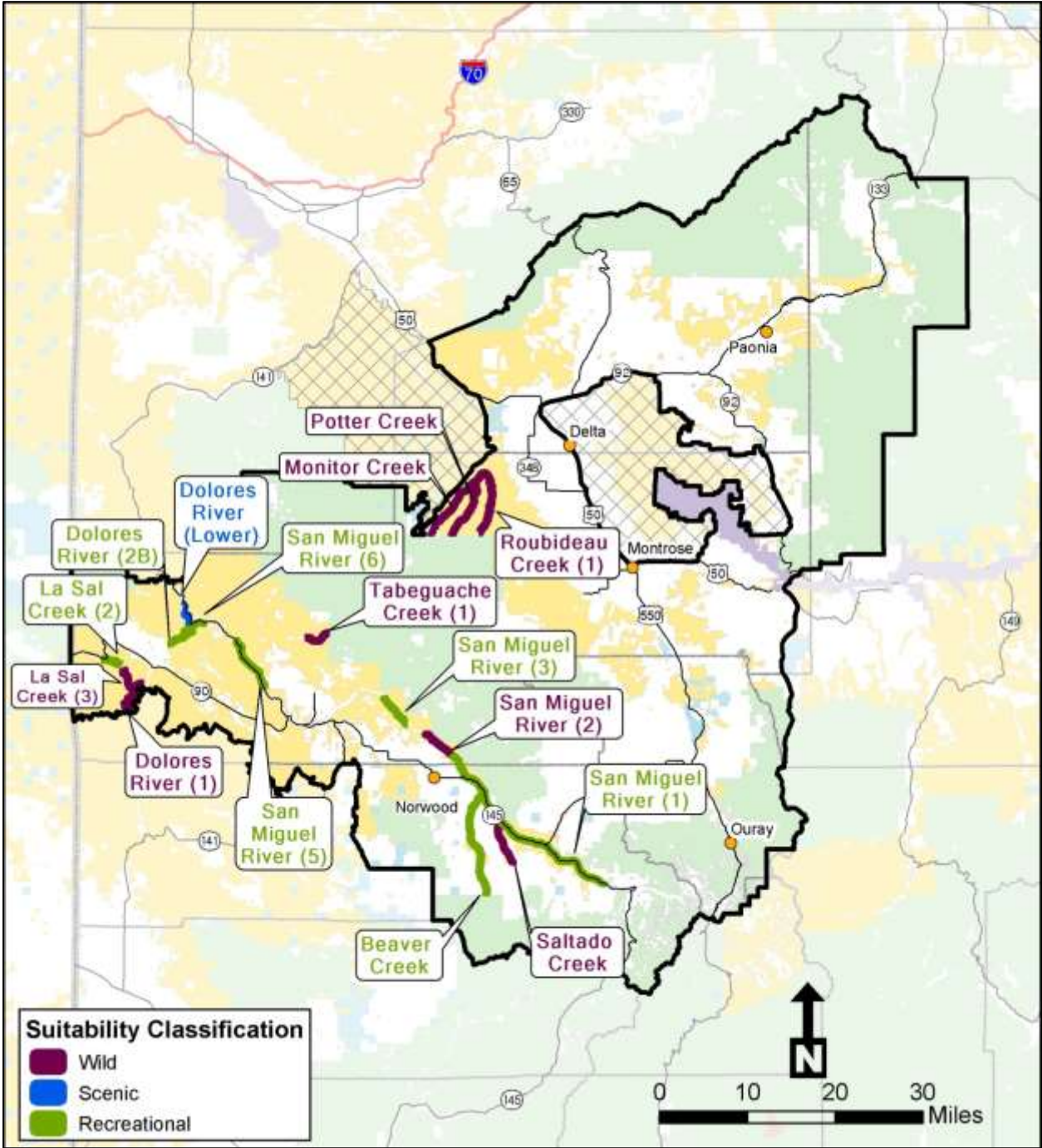


FIGURE 2 - MAP OF CLASSIFICATIONS FOR SUITABLE SEGMENTS

TABLE 5 - SUMMARY OF SEGMENT SUITABILITY

#	RIVER SEGMENT	SUITABLE MILES	BLM MILES	OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES	RECOMMENDED CLASSIFICATION
SUITABLE SEGMENTS					
Lower Gunnison River					
7	Monitor Creek	9.4	9.4	Fish, Vegetation	Wild
8	Potter Creek	9.8	9.8	Fish, Vegetation	Wild
10	Roubideau Creek, Segment 1	10.0	10.0	Recreational, Wildlife, Cultural, Vegetation	Wild
San Miguel River					
14	Beaver Creek	14.3	14.2	Vegetation	Recreational
17	Saltado Creek	5.6	4.1	Vegetation	Wild
18	San Miguel River, Segment 1	27.2	17.3	Scenic, Recreational, Wildlife, Historic, Vegetation, Paleontology	Recreational
19	San Miguel River, Segment 2	4.0	3.6	Scenic, Recreational, Wildlife, Vegetation	Wild
20	San Miguel River, Segment 3	4.5	4.5	Recreational, Fish, Wildlife, Vegetation	Recreational
21	San Miguel River, Segment 5	7.5	1.3	Recreational, Fish, Historic, Vegetation	Recreational
22	San Miguel River, Segment 6	2.1	2.1	Recreational, Fish, Historic, Vegetation	Recreational
23	Tabeguache Creek, Segment 1	3.4	3.4	Vegetation	Wild
Lower Dolores River					
25	Lower Dolores River	4.2	4.2	Scenic, Recreational, Geologic, Fish, Wildlife	Scenic
Upper Dolores River					
27	Dolores River, Segment 2	5.3	5.3	Scenic, Recreational, Geologic, Fish, Wildlife, Vegetation	Recreational
30	La Sal Creek, Segment 2	3.3	3.3	Fish, Vegetation	Recreational
31	La Sal Creek, Segment 3	3.4	3.4	Scenic, Recreational, Fish, Cultural, Vegetation	Wild
34	Dolores River, Segment 1	8.7	8.7	**Recreation, Scenery, Fish, Wildlife, Geology, Ecology, Archaeology	Wild

**ORVs for (34) Dolores River, Segment 1 were identified by the Dolores Field Office and documented on page D-16 of the San Juan Public Lands Draft Land Management Plan, Appendix D.

#	RIVER SEGMENT	STUDY MILES	BLM MILES	OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES	ELIGIBILITY CLASSIFICATION
NOT SUITABLE SEGMENTS					
Lower Gunnison River					
5	Gunnison River, Segment 2	0.4	0.4	Fish	Recreational
11	Roubideau Creek, Segment 2	7.6	3.5	Wildlife, Vegetation	Scenic
North Fork of the Gunnison River					
12	Deep Creek	2.6	0.6	Fish	Scenic
13	West Fork Terror Creek	1.2	0.5	Fish	Scenic
San Miguel River					
15	Dry Creek	10.5	10.4	Scenic, Geologic	Wild
16	Naturita Creek	25.0	10.0	Fish	Scenic
24	Tabeguache Creek, Segment 2	11.6	7.9	Cultural, Vegetation	Recreational
Lower Dolores River					
26	North Fork Mesa Creek	8.5	5.8	Vegetation (not supported following review)	Scenic
Upper Dolores River					
28	Ice Lake Creek, Segment 2	0.6	0.3	Scenic	Scenic
29	La Sal Creek, Segment 1	4.8	0.6	Fish, Vegetation	Recreational
32	Lion Creek, Segment 2	1.6	1.3	Vegetation	Scenic
33	Spring Creek	2.7	1.5	Vegetation	Recreational

TABLE 6 - SEGMENT CHANGES FROM ELIGIBILITY TO SUITABILITY

HYDROLOGIC UNIT	RIVER SEGMENT	CHANGES FROM ELIGIBILITY TO SUITABILITY
LOWER GUNNISON	7 - Monitor Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fish survey conducted by the BLM indicates viable populations of bluehead sucker (<i>Catostomus discobolus</i>) and flannelmouth sucker (<i>Catostomus latipinnis</i>), warranting the addition of a Fish ORV. A Colorado Natural Heritage Program review lowered the rarity rankings of the narrowleaf cottonwood/strapleaf willow/silver buffaloberry and Fremont cottonwood/skunkbush sumac plant communities to G3 (although the Vegetation ORV is still supported).
	8 - Potter Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fish survey conducted by the BLM indicates viable populations of bluehead sucker (<i>Catostomus discobolus</i>) and flannelmouth sucker (<i>Catostomus latipinnis</i>), warranting the addition of a Fish ORV. A Colorado Natural Heritage Program review lowered the rarity ranking of the narrowleaf cottonwood/strapleaf willow/silver buffaloberry plant community to G3 (although the Vegetation ORV is still supported).
	10 - Roubideau Creek, Segment 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Colorado Natural Heritage Program review lowered the rarity ranking of the Fremont cottonwood/skunkbush sumac plant communities to G3 (although the Vegetation ORV is still supported). Reduced segment length to begin at UFO boundary and exclude private land upstream.
	11 - Roubideau Creek, Segment 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a review by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program that lowered the rarity ranking of the Fremont cottonwood/skunkbush sumac plant community to G3, the segment no longer possesses a Vegetation ORV and the remaining Wildlife ORV could not be adequately substantiated to support WSR eligibility.
SAN MIGUEL	14 - Beaver Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed classification from <i>Scenic</i> to <i>Recreational</i> to allow for protection of the ORV, while providing reasonable certainty that future water development projects could move forward with minimal difficulty.
	19 - San Miguel River, Segment 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced segment length to end at the Bennett property in order to protect landowner interests at Horsefly Creek. Modified corridor boundaries to follow the natural topography of the canyon rims.
	20 - San Miguel River, Segment 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed classification from <i>Scenic</i> to <i>Recreational</i> due to the presence of the CC Ditch, two BLM campgrounds, and many number of mining claims along the stretch, as well as a dirt road running parallel to the river. Reduced segment length to exclude the Bennett property, as well as private land, at the lower end of the segment.

HYDROLOGIC UNIT	RIVER SEGMENT	CHANGES FROM ELIGIBILITY TO SUITABILITY
	21 - San Miguel River, Segment 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced segment length to begin downstream from the Richards property, run the length of The Nature Conservancy property, and terminate at the confluence with Tabeguache Creek. Modified corridor boundaries to extend rim to rim and follow existing developments and barriers (such as the state highway).
	22 - San Miguel River, Segment 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced segment length to begin downstream of Umetco Minerals Corporation property and terminate at the confluence with the Dolores River.
	23 - Tabeguache Creek, Segment 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced segment length to begin at the USFS boundary and end above water diversion.
LOWER DOLORES	25 - Lower Dolores River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced segment length to end at and exclude the Weimer property. Modified corridor to circumvent mining claims, using Highway 141 to delineate the east boundary and natural topographic features such as the canyon rim to delineate the west boundary.
	26 - North Fork Mesa Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a review by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program that lowered the rarity ranking of the narrowleaf cottonwood/ strappleaf willow/silver buffaloberry plant community to G3, the segment no longer possesses a Vegetation ORV to support WSR eligibility.
UPPER DOLORES	27 - Dolores River, Segment 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modified segment corridor to exclude Buck Shot Mine and associated ROWs and to follow the cliff line if less than one-quarter mile from the river center.
	30 - La Sal Creek, Segment 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed classification from <i>Scenic</i> to <i>Recreational</i> in order to accommodate potential future mining activities and road improvements. Reduced segment length to end at and exclude the Cashin Mine.
	34 - Dolores River, Segment 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced segment length to begin at the UFO boundary, terminate at the private land boundary south of Bedrock, and exclude the entire portion classified as <i>Recreational</i>. Delineated corridor boundary from rim to rim or one-quarter mile from high water mark (whichever measure is less).

**C. SUITABLE SEGMENTS:
ASSESSMENT & SUITABILITY
DETERMINATION**

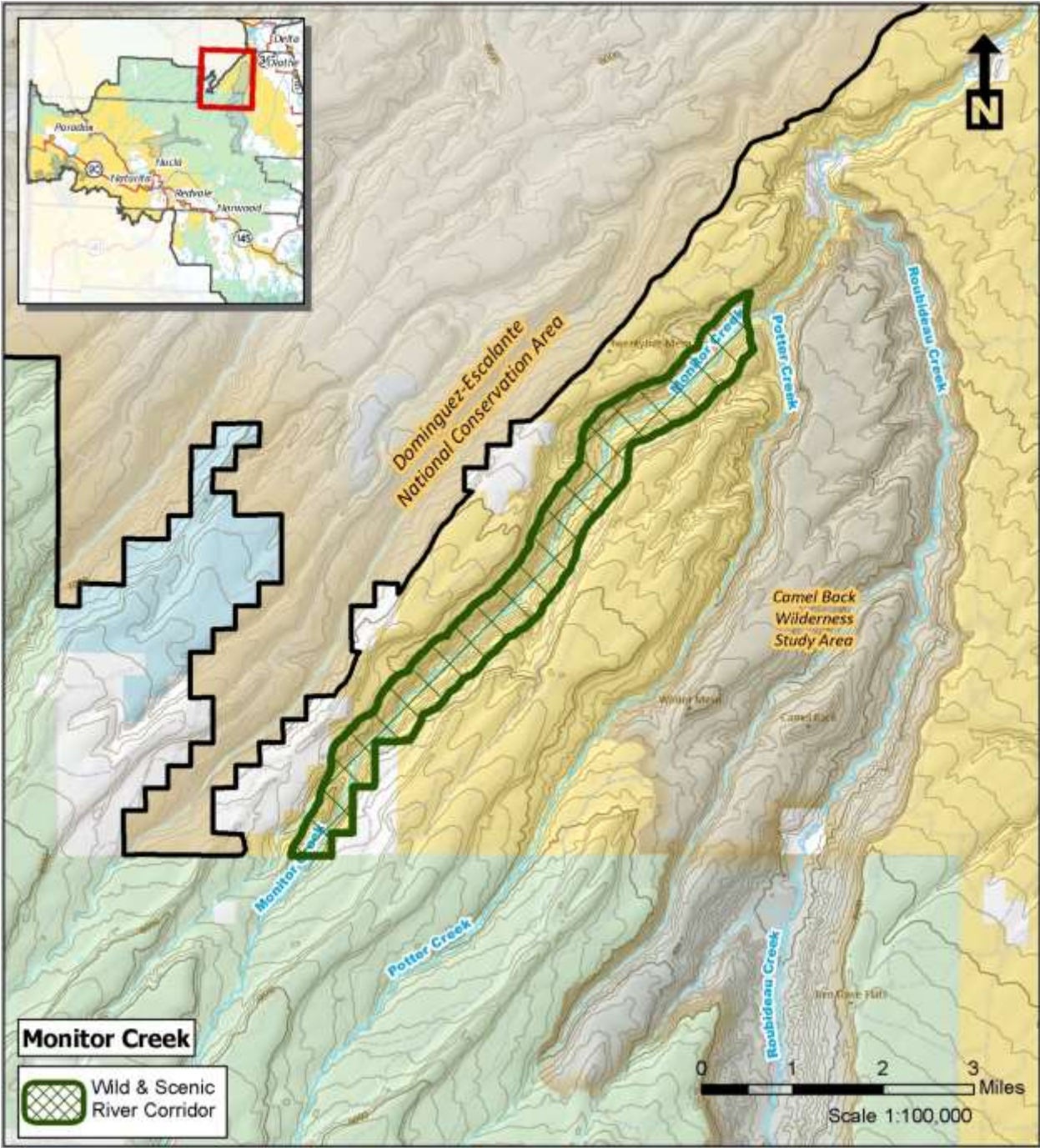


FIGURE 3 - (7) MONITOR CREEK

7 ~ MONITOR CREEK



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Wild

ORVs: Fish, Vegetation

Suitable Length: 9.4 miles

BLM-administered: 9.4 miles

Key Considerations:

- Protecting a stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes needed to sustain a healthy riparian vegetation community within the segment might only be achieved through federal WSR designation.
- Water yield through the segment contributes significantly to the proper hydrologic function of Potter and Roubideau creeks.
- The small percentage of private land is primarily consolidated near the upper terminus and predominantly outside of areas containing the Vegetation ORV.



LOWER GUNNISON HYDROLOGIC UNIT

Monitor Creek was found to be suitable for WSR consideration, with a classification of *Wild*. The stream corridor is natural and rugged, with no substantial evidence of human alteration. The suitability finding will protect the continued health of fish and plant communities identified within the segment.

Public Input

Public support for suitability focused on providing a reliable and enduring form of protection for the continued health of rare plant communities and the riparian ecosystem extending from USFS lands upstream, as well as citing values not considered for suitability (such as wilderness character and recreation opportunities).

Public comments opposing suitability cited existing protections, including a proposed conservation easement for adjacent land and a citizen-proposed wilderness area designation.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Fish

A recent fish survey conducted by the BLM indicates that Monitor Creek is likely to support viable populations of both bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*) and flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), warranting the addition of a Fish ORV.

Vegetation

This segment supports a superior (A-ranked) occurrence of the common coyote willow riparian shrubland (*Salix exigua/mesic graminoids*). Monitor Creek is within the Roubideau Creek Potential Conservation Area designated by the CNHP.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Monitor Creek is a small, intermittent headwater drainage managed primarily by the BLM and USFS, making the potential for future water development low. The segment has no existing instream flow water right protection.

Flow from Monitor Creek contributes heavily to Potter and Roubideau creeks downstream, providing spring spawning habitat for native warm water fishes. Protecting a streamflow regime that mimics the natural seasonal changes needed to sustain a healthy riparian vegetation community within this segment might only be secured through federal WSR designation.

There are no absolute or conditional water rights or impoundments in this segment, and absolute water rights upstream would not be affected by designation. A couple of small reservoirs (totaling 184 acre-feet of storage) occur above the upper terminus and have a slight potential to influence the flow regime through the segment.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

The BLM manages all of the land within the corridor, with private land primarily consolidated adjacent to the upper terminus. Because of the limited amount of adjacent private land and remote location, non-restrictive zoning in the area is not expected to have much of an impact on the segment. Travel along Monitor Creek is restricted to non-motorized vehicles on designated roads and trails.

Special Designations

The segment is within a proposed Special Recreation Management Area, as well as two potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) being considered within separate alternatives for the Uncompahgre RMP.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

No existing oil and gas leases or mining claims occur within the segment.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would be consistent with actions pertaining to the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*) and would complement the BLM Colorado Public Land Health Standard for riparian vegetation.

Because of the predominance of public land, few additional resources and facilities would be needed to effectively manage and support the ORV.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

ACEC designation would provide some protection for the segment, but would not confer the flow needed to support the Vegetation ORV. BLM staff determined that a state-based instream flow water right would likely be sufficient to protect the Fish ORV, but would likely not be able to protect the peak flows necessary to sustain the Vegetation ORV.

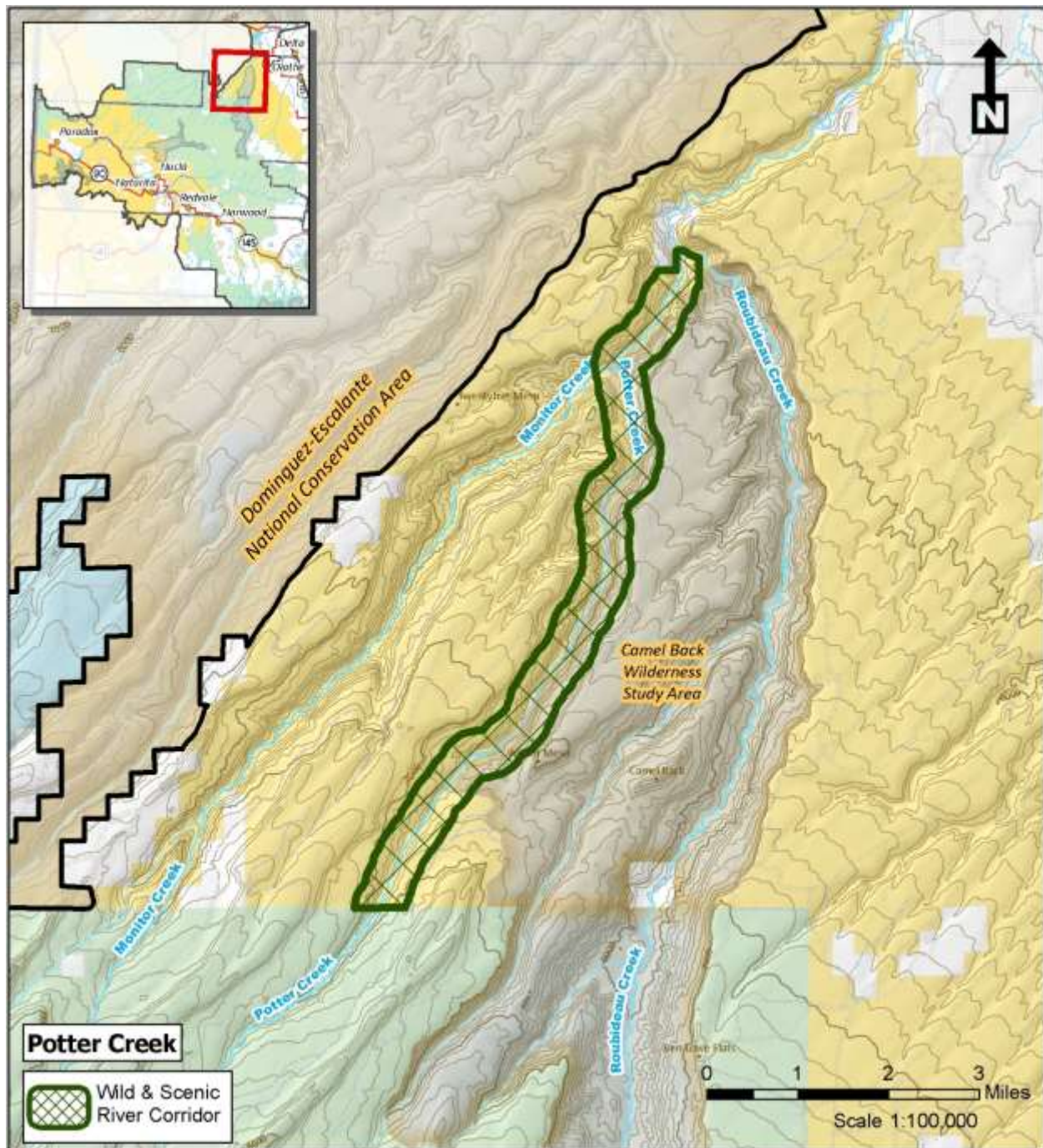


FIGURE 4 - (8) POTTER CREEK

Potter Creek was found to be *suitable* for WSR consideration, with a classification of *Wild*. The stream corridor is natural and rugged, with no substantial evidence of human alteration. The suitability finding will protect the continued health of the fish and plant communities identified within the segment.

Public Input

Public support for suitability focused on providing a reliable and enduring form of protection for the continued health of the riparian ecosystem extending from USFS lands upstream, as well as outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined form of recreation.

Public comments opposing suitability cited existing protections, including a proposed conservation easement for adjacent lands and a citizen-proposed wilderness area designation.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Fish

A recent fish survey conducted by the BLM indicates that Potter Creek supports viable populations of both bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*) and flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), warranting the addition of a Fish ORV.

Vegetation

This segment supports areas of narrowleaf cottonwood/strawleaf willow/silver buffaloberry riparian forest (*Populus angustifolia*/*Salix ligulifolia*/*Shepherdia argentea*). While the CNHP lowered the rarity ranking to G3, the BLM determined that the quality and extensiveness of the plant community warrants retaining the Vegetation ORV until a review determines whether or not the occurrence is superior (A-ranked). This segment is included in the Roubideau Creek Potential Conservation Area designated by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program.

8 ~ POTTER CREEK



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Wild

ORV: Fish, Vegetation

Eligible Length: 9.8 miles

BLM-Administered: 9.8 miles

Key Considerations:

- Most private land is relatively consolidated in one parcel near the lower terminus and predominantly outside of areas containing the Vegetation ORV. The segment would require few additional resources and facilities to manage effectively and support the ORV.
- Protecting a stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes needed to sustain a healthy riparian vegetation community might only be secured through federal WSR designation.
- Water yield through the segment contributes significantly to the proper hydrologic function of Roubideau Creek and the Gunnison River downstream.

LOWER GUNNISON HYDROLOGIC UNIT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

There are no absolute or conditional water rights or impoundments on or upstream of this segment. The CWCB holds an instream flow water right structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable extent. The water right is decreed for 1.8 cfs (from March 1 to March 31), 4 cfs (from April 1 to June 15), 1.8 cfs (from June 16 to July 31), and 1.4 cfs (from August 1 to February 28), helping to sustain the Vegetation ORV.

Flow from Potter Creek contributes to the proper hydrologic function of Roubideau Creek and the Gunnison River downstream. Protecting a streamflow regime that mimics the natural seasonal changes needed to sustain a healthy riparian vegetation community might only be secured through federal WSR designation.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

All land within the corridor is managed by the federal government. One parcel of private land is adjacent to the lower terminus.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are no existing oil and gas leases or mining claims within the segment.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would be consistent with actions pertaining to the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*) and would complement the BLM Colorado Public Land Health Standard for riparian vegetation.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitable finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The segment is within a proposed Special Recreation Management Area and two versions of a potential Area of Critical Environmental Concern being considered during development of the Uncompahgre RMP.

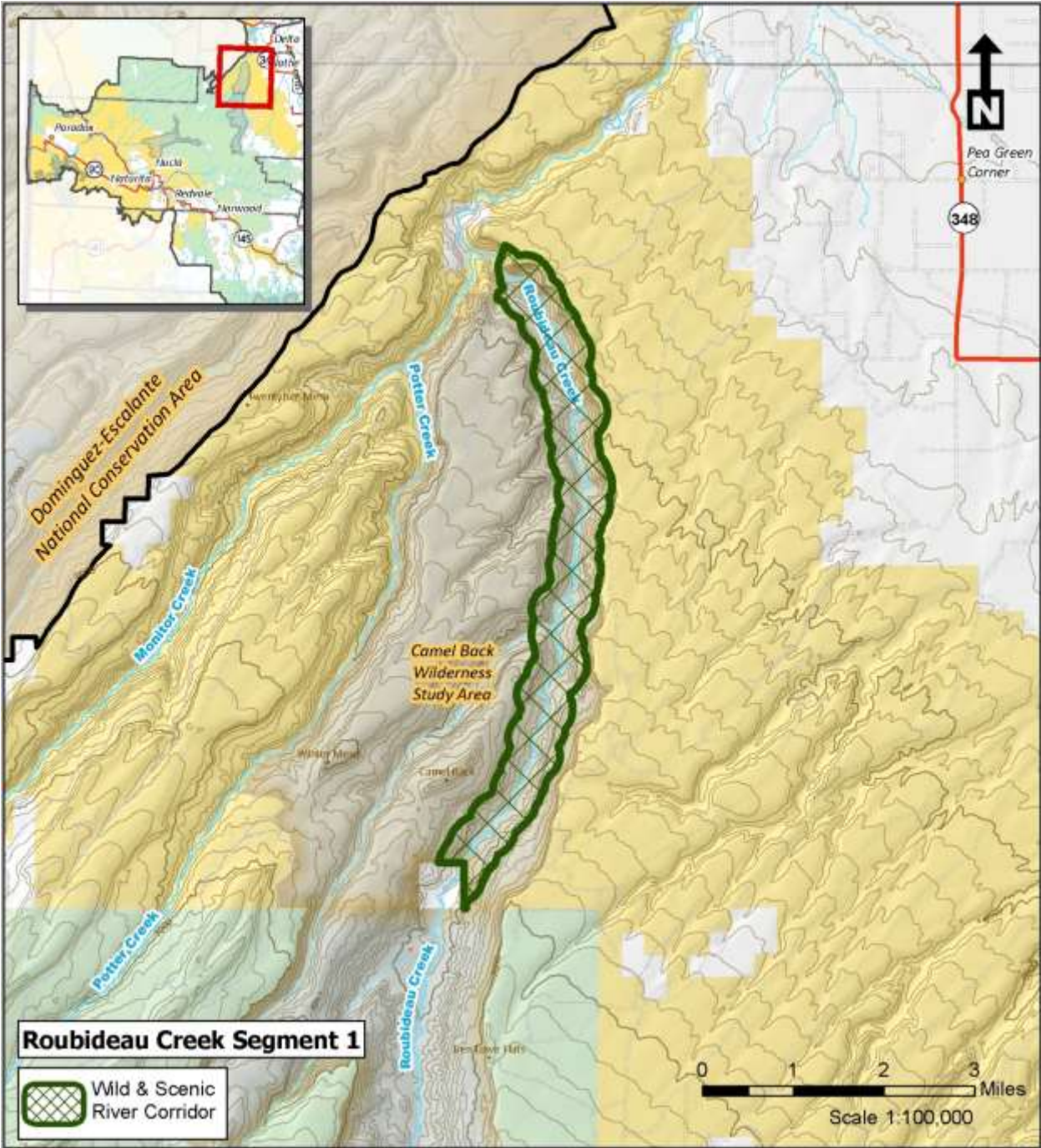


FIGURE 5 - (10) ROUBIDEAU CREEK, SEGMENT I

10 ~ ROUBIDEAU CREEK, SEGMENT I



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Wild

ORVs: Recreational, Wildlife, Cultural, Vegetation

Suitable Length: 10.0 miles

BLM-Administered: 10.0 miles

Key Considerations:

- The segment contains a wide array of ORVs.
- The segment is within the Camel Back Wilderness Study Area.
- Private land is consolidated into one parcel near the upper terminus.
- Protection of a streamflow regime that mimics the natural seasonal changes needed to sustain a healthy riparian vegetation community for this segment might only be protected through WSR designation.
- Roubideau Creek contributes significant flow to the proper hydrologic function of Lower Roubideau Creek and the Gunnison River downstream.

LOWER GUNNISON HYDROLOGIC UNIT

Roubideau Creek, Segment I was found to be *suitable* for WSR designation, with a classification of *Wild*. The segment lies almost entirely within the Camel Back Wilderness Study Area and possesses a wild and primitive character and range of ORVs.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Recreational

The perennial creek flows within a highly scenic, wilderness-quality canyon, offering superior opportunities for non-mechanized recreation in a primitive setting. Activities include hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, photography, nature study, and other non-mechanized uses, with vehicle access at the lower terminus.

Wildlife

The area has been designated as a potential conservation area for the northern leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*), a species currently under review by the Fish and Wildlife Service. This segment also provides regionally important habitat for desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis Canadensis*), which use the lower end of the creek extensively as a water source and the cliffs above for lambing.

Cultural

The stream flows past an inscription panel of extreme historic significance. The site has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under *Criteria A, B, and D*. In 1769, Juan Maria Rivera visited the site at the behest of the king of Spain and carved his name and a date into a rock face. The panel also contains a prehistoric mountain sheep figure.

Vegetation

The segment lies within the CNHP-designated Roubideau Creek Potential Conservation Area, supporting areas of globally imperiled (G2) skunkbush sumac/sandbar willow riparian shrubland (*Rhus trilobata/Salix exigua*).

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

The entire stream channel is federally managed. There are no absolute or conditional water rights or

impoundments within the segment. In the headwaters, a water diversion known as Spruce Spring Ditch (decreed for up to 9.3 cfs) transfers water from Roubideau Creek to the Dry Creek drainage (typically limited to the snowmelt period). The diversion diminishes spring and early summer flow through the segment.

The CWCB holds an instream flow water right decreed for 5 cfs (from March 1 to March 31), 21 cfs (from April 1 to June 15), 5 cfs (from June 16 to July 31), and 1.9 cfs (from August 1 to February 28) and structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable extent. The instream flow provides some protection to sustain the ORVs. Protecting a streamflow regime that mimics the natural seasonal changes needed to sustain a healthy riparian vegetation community for this segment might only be accomplished through WSR designation.

This section of Roubideau Creek in turn contributes flow to the proper hydrologic function of Lower Roubideau Creek and the Gunnison River downstream, providing habitat for native warm water fishes consistent with actions in the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

The entire corridor is managed by the BLM. One parcel of private agricultural land is adjacent to the corridor's upper terminus.

Special Designations

The segment lies almost entirely within the Camel Back Wilderness Study Area.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are no existing oil and gas leases or mining claims within the segment.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would complement the BLM Colorado Public Land Health standard for riparian vegetation. The segment would require few additional resources and facilities to effectively manage in support of the ORV.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

Although the segment is within a WSA, the designation is provisional and may not offer the long-term flow protection necessary for sustaining the Vegetation ORV. In addition, the segment is within two versions of a potential Area of Critical Environmental Concern being considered within separate alternatives for the Uncompahgre RMP.

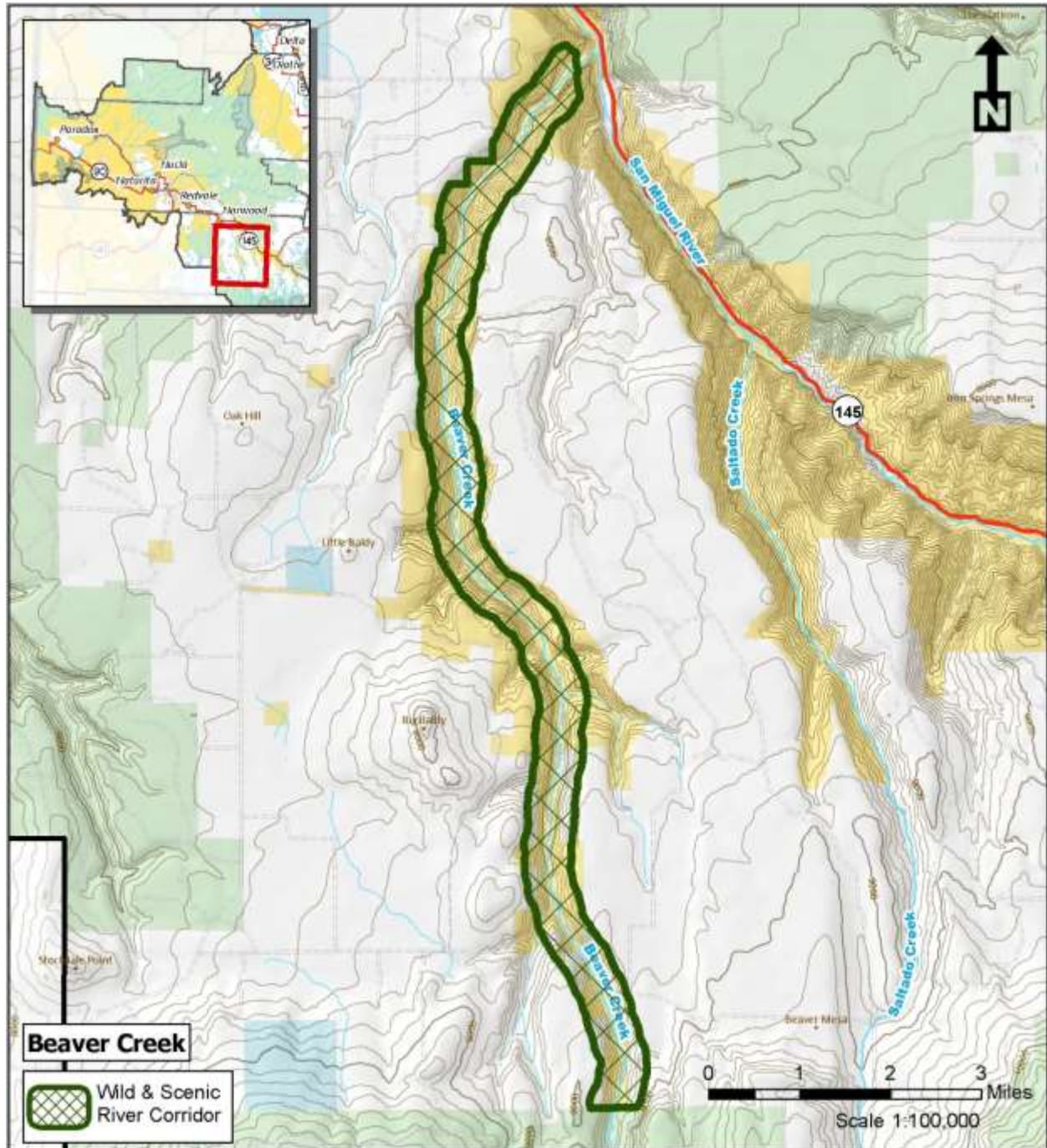


FIGURE 6 - (14) BEAVER CREEK

Beaver Creek was found to be suitable for WSR designation, with a classification of Recreational. It was thought that the classification would allow for protection of the Vegetation ORV, while providing reasonable certainty that future water development projects would receive consideration and could move forward with minimal difficulty. There was strong public support for the finding.

Public Interest in Designation

There was strong public support for suitability, including from the primary private landowner and San Miguel County, with protection of riparian vegetation and predominance of federal ownership most commonly cited as the bases.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUE

Vegetation

This segment supports an occurrence of narrowleaf cottonwood/blue spruce/thinleaf alder riparian forest (*Populus angustifolia*/*Picea pungens*/*Alnus tenuifolia*) along several miles of the corridor ranked as superior (A) by the CNHP. The BLM has designated an area that includes this segment as part of the San Miguel ACEC, primarily in order to protect this outstanding riparian community.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Beaver Creek provides flow for the proper hydrologic function of the San Miguel River system and river-dependent resource values (including aquatic and riparian plant and animal species). While there are no absolute or conditional water rights or impoundments within the segment, ditch diversions totaling 28 cfs and decreed storage rights totaling 203 acre-feet upstream of the segment and on tributaries diminish flow through the segment, primarily during irrigation season.

Conditional water rights for direct flow totaling 10 cfs and 6,043 acre-feet of storage rights occur upstream of the segment and on tributaries. If developed, these water rights would be senior to the instream flow water right.

14 ~ BEAVER CREEK



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Recreational

ORV: Vegetation

Suitable Length: 14.3 miles

BLM-Administered: 14.2 miles

Key Considerations:

- Beaver Creek provides value-added flow for the proper hydrologic function of the San Miguel River system and river-dependent resource values (including aquatic and riparian plant and animal species).
- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community for this segment might only be achieved through WSR designation.
- The principal private landowner within the corridor has expressed support for WSR designation.



**SAN MIGUEL
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

The Norwood Water Commission has a conditional water right on the San Miguel River.

The Naturita Canal presently diverts water from Beaver Creek upstream of the segment. The diversion is presently limited to a portion (approximately 60%) of the full decree due to water conveyance limitations of the canal system. As the infrastructure is improved to increase the water carrying capacity of the canal, more of the decree will be diverted, further depleting flows through the segment (based upon personal communication with Colorado Division of Water Resources Water Commissioner Aaron Todd). This water right is senior to both the existing state instream flow and any federal water right associated with WSR designation. In the 2004 Statewide Water Supply Initiative, the CWCB identified upper Beaver Creek as a potential dam site to help supply future water needs in the San Miguel River Basin.

A streamflow regime that mimics the natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community within the segment might only be achieved through WSR designation. The CWCB holds an instream flow water right along a portion of the segment decreed for 5 cfs (from May 1 to June 30) and 2.5 cfs (from July 1 to April 30), which is structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable extent. The instream flow provides some protection to sustain the Vegetation ORV. A 2.7-mile portion of the segment from the upper terminus to the confluence with Goat Creek has no water right.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Land ownership is primarily federal within an approximately one quarter-mile buffer of the creek. Approximately 13% of land in the San Miguel County portion of the corridor is private. Private lands on the east side of Beaver Creek are in the Forestry, Agriculture, and Open Zone District, which is intended to preserve large, relatively remote areas of the county for resource, agricultural, open space, and recreational purposes. These areas currently have minimal public facilities and services and are considered inappropriate for substantial development. Development and/or special uses are encouraged to be located away from environmentally sensitive land.

Private lands on the west side of the corridor are within the Wright's Mesa Zone District. The district is intended to preserve the rural and agricultural character of Wright's Mesa while encouraging compatible, diverse economic opportunities that complement the rural landscape. Wright's Mesa has a history of coexisting agricultural, ranching, residential, and small business uses that comprise its rural character. The district discourages sprawl patterns typically created by 35-acre lots by offering reasonable alternatives and incentives to cluster buildings, retain open lands, and keep large parcels intact.

The Beaver Creek corridor is closed to OHV use. If developed, a conditional water right on the San Miguel River could require an ROW along portions of Beaver Creek.

ROWS

Numerous BLM ROW authorizations cross or run adjacent to the creek, including distribution and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)/Tri-State transmission powerlines, a gas pipeline, a Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) highway, and a county road. These ROWs are primarily concentrated near the confluence of Beaver Creek with the San Miguel River.

Energy and Mineral Resources

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the segment corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

Although compatible with WSR designation, neither the existing ACEC and Special Recreation Management Area designations, nor the state instream flow water right secure sufficient instream flow to sustain the Vegetation ORV.

Segment access is somewhat restricted by limited existing roads and trails. WSR designation would complement the BLM Colorado Public Land Health standard for riparian vegetation.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs for administering and managing this segment for the Vegetation ORV are not likely to increase much above current funding levels. Factors that assist in protecting the ORV include: remoteness of the segment, limited trail access, and the predominance of federal land managed as an ACEC for riparian protection. It is unlikely that additional facilities would be needed to enhance management.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

WSR designation would provide the highest level of protection for the Vegetation ORV by necessitating acquisition of a federal water right that produces a flow rate mimicking natural, seasonal variation. Several existing authorities and segment features provide a lesser level of ORV protection, including an ACEC designation that protects riparian values, an existing state-based instream flow water right, environmentally supportive San Miguel County land use codes, and a high percentage of federally managed land within the corridor.

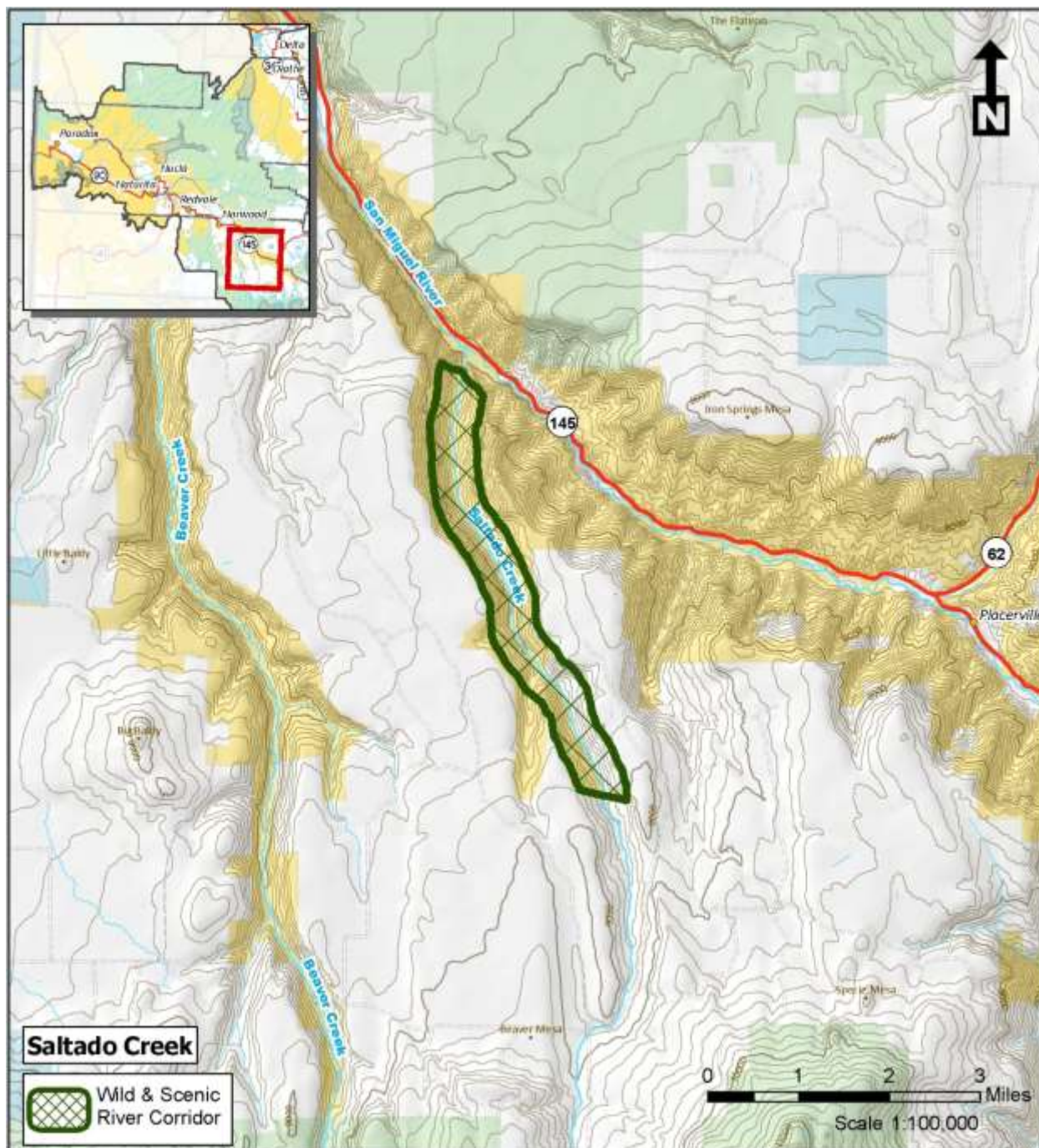


FIGURE 7 - (17) SALTADO CREEK

Saltado Creek was found to be *suitable* for WSR designation, with a classification of *Wild*. The finding will help to protect the area's primitive character and vulnerable plant community.

Public Interest in Designation

There was strong public support for suitability, including from a local homeowners association and San Miguel County, with the protection of riparian vegetation and stream-related values most commonly cited as the bases for designation.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUE

Vegetation

This segment supports an occurrence of narrowleaf cottonwood/blue spruce/thinleaf alder riparian forest (*Populus angustifolia*/*Picea pungens*/*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*) along several miles of its length ranked as superior (A) by the CNHP. The BLM has designated an area that includes this segment as part of the San Miguel ACEC, primarily in order to protect this outstanding riparian community.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

A streamflow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community might only be achieved through federal designation. The CWCB holds an instream flow water right along the entire segment decreed for 2 cfs (from May 1 to June 30) and 1 cfs (from July 1 to April 30) and structured to protect the natural environment (including the Vegetation ORV) to a reasonable extent. Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of the San Miguel River.

There are no water diversions or impoundments within the segment. Absolute water rights upstream of the segment include ditch diversions totaling 39 cfs and storage rights totaling 11.4 acre-feet. These water rights cause some depletion of streamflow through the segment, especially during the irrigation season.

17 ~ SALTADO CREEK



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Wild

ORV: Vegetation

Suitable Length: 5.6 miles

BLM-Administered: 4.1 miles

Key Considerations:

- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian community might only be achieved through designation.
- Saltado Creek provides value-added flow for the proper hydrologic function of the San Miguel River system and river-dependent resource values (including aquatic and riparian plant and animal species).
- San Miguel County and a local homeowners association have expressed support for WSR designation.
- The majority of the segment is comprised of contiguous BLM-administered land, allowing for efficient management if designated.
- There are no roads or water right diversions within the segment.

SAN MIGUEL HYDROLOGIC UNIT

Conditional water rights above the upper terminus include flow diversions totaling 5 cfs and storage rights totaling 15 acre-feet. If developed, these water rights would have seniority over the existing instream flow and any water right established as part of WSR designation, and could further diminish flow through the segment.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Approximately 18% of the corridor consists of private land within the Forestry, Agriculture, and Open Zone District of San Miguel County. The district is intended to preserve large, relatively remote areas of the county for resource, agricultural, open space, and recreational purposes. These areas currently have minimal public facilities and services and are considered inappropriate for substantial development. Development and special uses are encouraged to be located outside of environmentally sensitive areas.

Special Designations

The segment is within the San Miguel Special Recreation Management Area and ACEC. The area is closed to OHV use.

ROWs and Withdrawals

Numerous BLM ROW authorizations cross or briefly run adjacent to the creek, including distribution and telephone lines, a CDOT highway, two WAPA transmission lines, and the Tri-State Nucla-Sunshine 115 kV transmission project.

While portions of the segment are within an area identified as a Powersite Classification, the classification does not preclude WSR designation. The federal government acquired public access easement across private lands adjacent to the creek in the southern upper reach of the segment.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

The northern lower reach of the segment has contiguous public land and lack of development, while along the southern upper reach, land ownership is split. WSR designation would be consistent with the BLM Colorado Public Land Health standard for riparian vegetation.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Administering and managing this segment for the Vegetation ORV would require a moderate increase in funding over current levels. The segment is remote, has no developed access, and 82% of the corridor is federal land managed as an ACEC for riparian protection, factors that assist in protecting the ORV.

It is unlikely that additional facilities would be necessary as a result of WSR designation. If available for purchase from willing sellers, private land parcels within the corridor would have added value for ORV protection.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

WSR designation would provide the highest level of protection for the Vegetation ORV by necessitating acquisition of a federal water right that produces flow rates mimicking natural, seasonal variation. However, several existing authorities and segment features provide a lesser level of ORV protection, including: an ACEC designation intended to protect riparian values, an existing state-based instream flow water right, environmentally supportive San Miguel County land use codes, and a high percentage of federally managed land within the corridor.

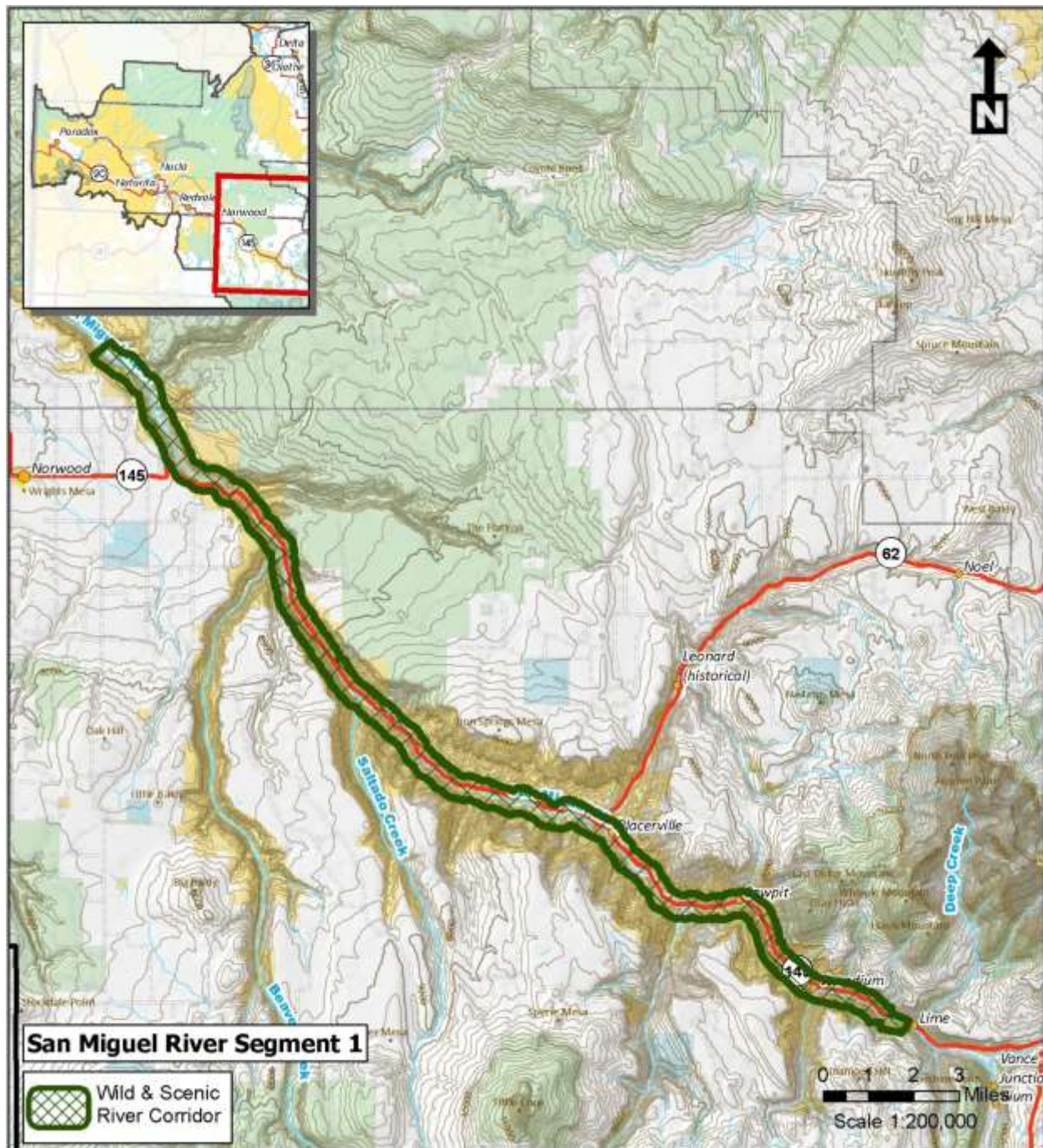


FIGURE 8 - (18) SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT I

San Miguel River, Segment I was found to be *suitable* for VWSR designation, with a classification of *Recreational*. Suitability would allow for protection of the multitude of ORVs within the corridor. While concerns were raised regarding uranium and recreational placer mining within the segment, the RAC Subgroup believed that a *Recreational* classification would allow for the continuation of these activities.

Public Interest in Designation

The segment received much support for and opposition to suitability, with supporters (including San Miguel County) citing the unparalleled scenery and natural and cultural features within the corridor and opponents (including the Montrose County Board of Commissioners) expressing concern over potential restrictions on historic uses.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Scenic

An interdisciplinary BLM field inventory team evaluated and assigned this section of the San Miguel a *Scenic Quality Classification* of A. The river here is boulder-strewn, with a strong and constant gradient. The energetic, splashy flow is the keystone to the scenic quality of the reach. The color and contrast provided by steep canyon walls and interesting erosional patterns add to the visual appeal. Thick, diverse riparian vegetation provides additional scenic interest, changing in color and density throughout the growing season. From Deep Creek to Leopard Creek, stunning views of the San Juan mountain range enhance the landscape. A few modifications, including power lines and roads, are a minor detraction from the scenery.

Recreational

This entire segment of the San Miguel is within the San Miguel River Special Recreation Management Area and provides superior opportunities for river-related recreation. The river is easily accessed via paved highway and contains a number of high-quality BLM recreation

I8 ~ SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT I



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Recreational

ORV: Scenic, Recreational, Wildlife, Historic, Vegetation, Paleontology

Suitable Length: 27.2 miles

BLM-Administered: 17.3 miles

Key Considerations:

- The segment contains a wide array of ORVs.
- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community for this segment might only be achieved through WSR designation.
- Over 80% of land within the segment is public. Most of the segment is within San Miguel County, which has expressed support for WSR designation. A small portion of the segment is within Montrose County, which opposes designation.

SAN MIGUEL HYDROLOGIC UNIT

sites, including six developed boat launches, six picnic areas, a campground, and an interpretive center. During snowmelt, whitewater rafters and kayakers are challenged by the swift currents and complex hydraulics of this boulder-strewn river. Outside of the snowmelt season, the river provides excellent opportunities for trout fishing on complex pocket water. Fishing enthusiasts may access the river via foot or raft.

The river's reputation for outstanding recreation, combined with the availability of commercial guide services, consistently draws visitors from around the world. This section also offers exceptional opportunities for sightseeing and photography along the Unaweep-Tabeguache Byway. The byway is marketed to visitors both within and outside of Colorado by the Unaweep-Tabeguache Byway Committee and the Colorado Office of Tourism.

Wildlife

Portions of the river corridor in this segment represent one of the finest protected Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat sites in the United States. The Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat is recognized as the richest terrestrial bird habitat type in North America, providing breeding sites for a wide variety of species, and primary migratory routes for nearly all songbirds throughout the western United States. According to the National Audubon Society, more than 300 bird species have been observed in the San Miguel River corridor.

Historic

Remnants of an old railroad grade follow along much of this section. The Rio Grande Southern Railroad operated a fleet of seven unusual railcars along a narrow gauge track from the 1930s until service ended in 1952, at which point the line was decommissioned. The rail line was known as the Galloping Goose. Built from car, truck, and bus parts, the lightweight "motors" proved to be an economical method for transporting mail and passengers between Durango and Ridgway.

The remains of historic uranium ore processing loadout areas are also present along this stretch. The site qualifies for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion A*.

Vegetation

This reach supports occurrences of four riparian communities, river birch/mesic graminoid riparian shrubland (*Betula occidentalis*/mesic graminoids), narrowleaf cottonwood/blue spruce/thinleaf alder riparian forest (*Populus angustifolia*/*Picea pungens*/*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*), narrowleaf cottonwood/thinleaf alder riparian woodland (*Populus angustifolia*/*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*), and thinleaf alder/mesic graminoid riparian shrubland (*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*/mesic graminoids), ranked as Superior (A) by the CNHP. The reach falls within the Middle San Miguel Potential Conservation Area and the BLM has designated an area which includes this segment as part of the San Miguel ACEC, primarily to protect these outstanding riparian communities.

Paleontology

For many miles, the canyon formed by the San Miguel River exposes chunks of the Morrison Formation, remnants of a one hundred million-year old river bed. This Jurassic-age river meandered eastward from the ancestral Rocky Mountains into immense inland seas. Many fossils, including rare fish, plants, and fragmentary dinosaur bones, can be found along this stretch.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of the lower San Miguel River and Dolores River downstream. The CWCB holds two instream flow water rights structured to protect the natural environment and sustain the ORVs to a reasonable extent.

Instream flow from Deep Creek to Fall Creek provides for a year-round flow of 20 cfs, while the flow from Fall Creek to the lower terminus calls for 93 cfs from May 1 to October 14 and 61 cfs for the remainder of the year. Flow needed to support some recreational boating activities and riparian protection might only be secured through water rights associated with WSR designation.

Approximately six water diversions scattered along the segment are not prominent features in the corridor and do not detract from the natural character of the river. Impoundments upstream of the segment include Trout Lake and Hope Lake on the Lake Fork tributary. There are a few off-channel impoundments within the segment associated with Cascabel Ranch near the lower terminus.

According to a draft BLM San Miguel instream flow assessment, senior water rights on the mainstem of the San Miguel River between Horsefly Creek and Naturita Creek divert water downstream of the segment. Much of this water demand is conveyed through the segment, but is limited primarily to the irrigation season.

Estimates from the Colorado HydroBase Decision Support System indicate that there are more than 160,000 acre-feet of conditional storage water rights on either the mainstem or tributaries within and upstream of the segment. If developed, these rights could influence flow through the segment.

Much of the water needed to meet future demands would come from conservation practices and development of existing water rights, including some conditional water rights in the San Miguel Basin. Most of these rights are senior to existing instream flow water rights or any instream flow created through WSR designation. Dam sites identified on the mainstem may be very difficult to develop, given current construction costs and concerns over environmental impacts.

Any new water right or change to existing rights is limited by the instream flow water right. Authorization for any new structures on BLM lands would contain conditions to ensure compliance with WSR Act.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Zoning

A portion of the segment within Montrose County is zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. Many of these uses are not related to agriculture and have the potential to conflict with the intent of the WSR Act.

Portions of the corridor downstream of Beaver Creek and on the southwest side of the San Miguel River are within the Wright's Mesa Zone District in San Miguel County. The district is intended to

preserve the rural and agricultural character of Wright's Mesa while encouraging diverse economic opportunities compatible with the rural landscape. Wright's Mesa has a history of coexisting agriculture, ranching, residential, and small business uses that comprise its rural character. The district discourages large-lot patterns of sprawl (typically created through 35-acre developments) by offering alternatives and incentives to cluster buildings, retain open lands, and keep large parcels intact.

The remaining portions of the corridor within San Miguel County are primarily in the Forestry, Agriculture, and Open Zone District. The district is intended to preserve large, relatively remote areas of the county for resource, agricultural, open space, and recreational purposes. These areas currently have minimal public facilities and services and are considered inappropriate for substantial development. Development and/or special uses are encouraged to be located away from environmentally sensitive land.

The incorporated town of Placerville is zoned into two districts: The Placerville Residential Zone District provides areas and design standards for single-family residences surrounding the Placerville Commercial Zone District. The Placerville Commercial Zone District provides standards for commercial establishments located on Front Street in Placerville and at the southwest corner of the intersection of State Highways 62 and 145 west of Placerville. The size of the district cannot be increased.

There are a few planned unit developments along the San Miguel River in the vicinity of the incorporated town of Sawpit. The allowed uses within the planned unit developments are primarily single family housing on large lots (with a minimum of 35 acres). Other uses, such as multi-family housing and neighborhood commercial development, are allowed upon approval from the Board of County Commissioners.

ROWs and Withdrawals

ROWs within the segment include four power and nine telephone lines, gas pipelines, private access roads, county roads, a highway, an historic ditch, two WAPA 345-kilovolt power lines, the McKeever drift fence to the USFS boundary, and C-64335 river diversion weirs.

While portions of the segment are within an area identified by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as having potential for hydropower development, classification as a Power Site does not preclude WSR designation.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. According to the State of Colorado Oil and Gas Commission electronic well records database, there is an abandoned oil and gas well within the corridor.

Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

Several private land parcels are scattered throughout the corridor. A small portion of the segment is within Montrose County, which has adopted a resolution opposing WSR designation.

WSR designation would complement BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards for riparian vegetation and wildlife.

Special Designations

Most of the segment is within a Special Recreation Management Area and an ACEC.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

The costs for managing this segment for the Scenic, Recreational, Wildlife, Historic, Vegetation, and Paleontologic ORVs would be moderately higher than current funding levels. The segment is within an existing Special Recreation Management Area and an ACEC from Placerville downstream, both of which have resulted in additional funding and resource protection actions along the river corridor.

A state highway parallels most of this reach, providing for easy access and use of the river and riparian area.

The segment includes several scattered parcels of private land. The BLM would pursue land acquisition from willing sellers as funding and opportunities arose, which would add value toward management and protection of the ORVs.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

While WSR designation would provide the most comprehensive protection for the ORVs, several existing authorities and segment features provide some lesser level of ORV protection:

ACEC and Special Recreation Management Area designations emphasize management for riparian and recreation values.

An existing state-based instream flow water right in the San Miguel River helps to sustain the water-dependent ORVs.

Development objectives on private lands in most of the segment are within the San Miguel County Land Use Code, which promotes preserving large remote areas for resource, agricultural, open space, and recreational purposes.

A large portion of private land within the corridor is managed by The Nature Conservancy, which supports a finding of suitability.

In addition, conservation easements could be pursued on select private portions of the corridor, which would be value added in providing protection for the ORVs.

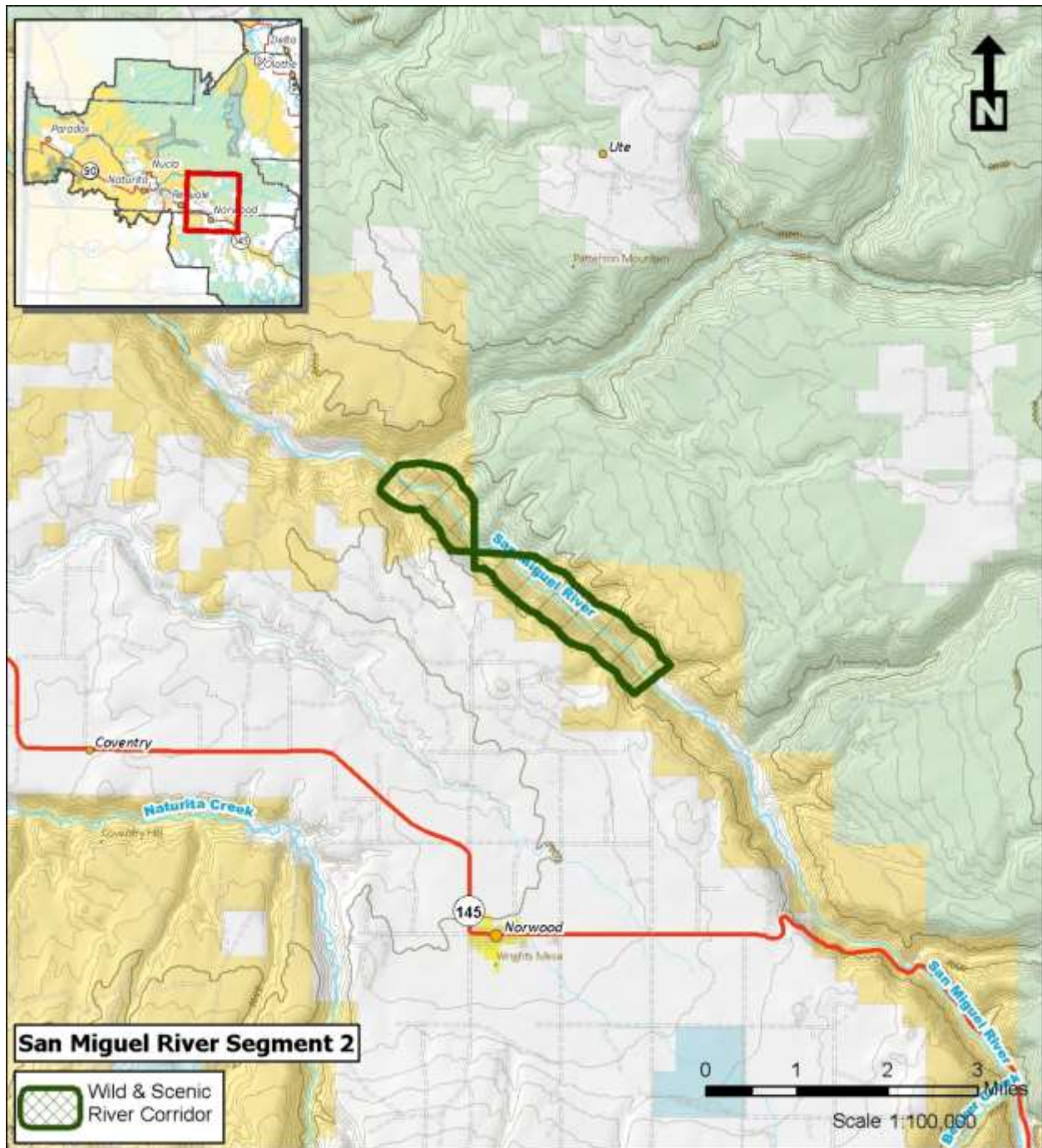


FIGURE 9 - (19) SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT 2

San Miguel River, Segment 2 was found to be *suitable* for WSR designation, with a classification of *Wild*. The segment length was shortened to end at the Bennett property in order to protect landowner interests at Horsefly Creek, and the natural topography of the canyon rims will be used to delineate the corridor.

The RAC Subgroup considered overall land health within the segment to be of primary concern. While the impact of grazing on the Vegetation ORV is addressed to some extent through the current ACEC and Special Recreation Management Area designations, it was determined that WSR designation would provide longer-lasting protections.

Public Interest in Designation

The segment received much support for and opposition to suitability, with supporters identifying the outstanding canyon setting and stream-related values within the corridor and opponents expressing concern over potential restrictions on historic and future uses of water and the corridor.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Scenic

An interdisciplinary BLM field inventory team evaluated the area and assigned a *Scenic Quality Classification of A*. The San Miguel River flows clear and is a dominant element in this section. Complex erosional patterns combine with a diverse riparian plant community to form a varied landscape in contrasting hues of green, red, yellow, orange, gray, tan, and blue. This section of river is boulder-strewn and has a consistent gradient. The constant, energetic, splashy flow creates visually pleasing hydraulic features that are rare in the region of comparison. Adjacent scenery contributes to the setting.

Recreational

This section of the San Miguel River offers a rare and extraordinary opportunity for primitive river recreation, as the riparian surroundings transition from the Rocky Mountain physiographic region of the upper San Miguel to

19 ~ SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT 2



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Wild

ORVs: Scenic, Recreational, Wildlife, Vegetation

Suitable Length: 4.0 miles

BLM-Administered: 4.0 miles

Key Considerations:

- The segment contains a wide array of ORVs.
- The segment is comprised entirely of public lands.
- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community for this segment might only be achieved through WSR designation.



SAN MIGUEL HYDROLOGIC UNIT

the Colorado Plateau physiographic region of the lower San Miguel. With no roads or developments, this section appears primitive and natural. River recreation in this section includes rafting, kayaking and trout fishing, as part of long day or multi-day trips. This and the adjacent downstream segment support the best population of self-sustaining trout in the San Miguel. There are several primitive BLM campsites along the reach. The entire reach lies within the San Miguel Special Recreation Management Area, used by private and commercial river runners and trout fishers.

Wildlife

Portions of the river corridor in this segment represent one of the finest examples of protected Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat in the United States. The Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat is recognized as the richest terrestrial bird habitat type in North America, providing breeding sites for a wide variety of bird species and primary migratory routes for nearly all songbirds throughout the western United States. According to the National Audubon Society, more than 300 bird species have been observed in the San Miguel River corridor.

Vegetation

This segment supports five distinct and outstanding riparian communities. These include four superior (A-ranked) occurrences of communities classified as globally vulnerable (G3) thinleaf alder/mesic graminoid riparian shrubland (*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*/mesic graminoids), narrowleaf cottonwood/blue spruce/thinleaf alder riparian forest (*Populus angustifolia*/*Picea pungens*/*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*), narrowleaf cottonwood/thinleaf alder riparian woodland (*Populus angustifolia*/*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*), and river birch/mesic graminoid riparian shrubland (*Betula occidentalis*/mesic graminoids). In addition, a superior (A-ranked) occurrence of blue spruce/red osier dogwood riparian forest (*Picea pungens*/*Cornus sericea*), ranked as apparently secure (G4), occurs here as well. The site is included within the CNHP-designated San Miguel River, Clay Creek to Horsefly Creek Potential Conservation Area. The BLM has also designated an area that includes this segment as part of the San Miguel ACEC, primarily in order to protect these outstanding riparian communities.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of the lower San Miguel River and Dolores River downstream.

The CWCB holds an instream flow water right along the entire segment decreed for 93 cfs from May 1 to October 14 and 61 cfs the remainder of the year structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable extent. The instream flow provides some protection to sustain the ORVs.

There are no absolute or conditional water rights or impoundments within the segment.

If developed, conditional water rights upstream of the segment could influence flow through the segment. Colorado Decision Support System HydroBase estimates indicate that there are more than 160,000 acre-feet of conditional storage water rights upstream of the segment, on either the mainstem or tributaries.

There are a few impoundments upstream of the segment, including Trout Lake and Hope Lake (on the Lake Fork tributary), and a few off-channel impoundments associated with Cascabel Ranch immediately upstream of the segment.

Any new water right or change to existing rights is limited by the instream flow water right. Authorization for any new structures on BLM lands would contain conditions to ensure compliance with WSR Act.

Senior rights on the mainstem of the San Miguel River divert water in the reach between Horsefly Creek and Naturita Creek downstream of this segment (based upon San Miguel legal and institutional analysis). Much of the water demanded by these diversions is conveyed through the segment, primarily limited to the irrigation season.

Much of the water needed to meet future demand in the San Miguel River Basin would come from conservation practices and development of existing water rights, including some of the existing conditional water rights in the San Miguel Basin. Most of these rights are senior to both the existing instream flow water rights and any instream flow created through WSR designation.

According to San Miguel legal and institutional analysis, potential dam sites on the San Miguel River (downstream of Leopard Creek near the confluence with Beaver Creek and above Horsefly Creek) and major tributaries (including Horsefly Creek and Maverick Draw) identified in the 2004 Statewide Water Supply Initiative are unlikely to be developed, given current costs and concern over environmental impacts. Saltado Reservoir (with a conditional fill and refill right totaling over 140,000 acre-feet on the San Miguel River downstream of Specie Creek) is included in this assessment.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Approximately 1.7% of the corridor consists of private land zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a fee or special use permit. Many of the uses are not related to agriculture and have the potential to conflict with the intent of the WSR Act.

Special Designations

The segment is within an ACEC, as well as a Special Recreation Management Area. WSR designation is compatible with these existing designations.

Withdrawals

While portions of the segment are within an area classified as having potential for Waterpower and Reservoir Resources the Powersite Classification does not preclude WSR designations.

Energy and Mineral Resources

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

River flow needed to support some recreational boating activities and provide adequate protection for the riparian vegetation might only be secured through water rights associated with WSR designation. Designation would complement BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards for riparian vegetation and wildlife. There is no road access within the segment.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Estimated costs for administering and managing this segment for the Scenic, Recreational, Wildlife, and riparian Vegetation ORVs would be slightly higher than current funding levels. The river corridor is remote, has limited trail access, and is entirely comprised of federal land, most of which is managed as both an ACEC (for riparian protection) and a Special Recreation Management Area. These designations provide some additional funding necessary for managing and protecting the ORVs.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The segment is within an ACEC, as well as a Special Recreation Management Area.

Current instream flow water rights held by the CWCB provide some protection for flows necessary to support the ORVs.

The area is identified in the Colorado Citizens Wilderness Proposal and the Colorado *Wilderness Act* of 2009 (H.R. 4289) introduced by Congresswoman Diana DeGette. WSR designation would be compatible with wilderness designation and wilderness characteristics.

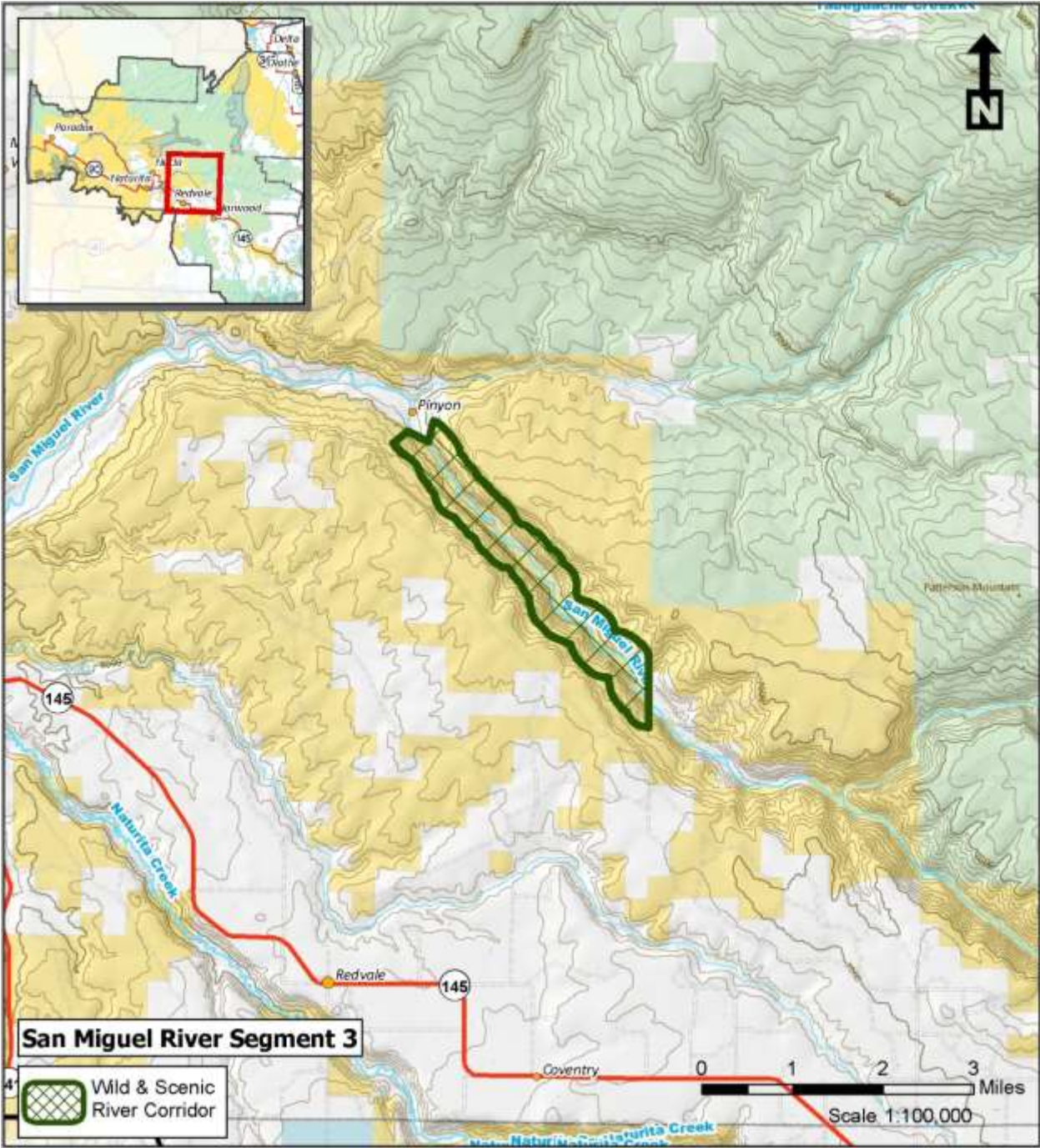


FIGURE 10 - (20) SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT 3

20 ~ SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT 3



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Recreational

ORVs: Recreational, Fish, Wildlife, Vegetation

Suitable Length: 4.5 miles

BLM-Administered: 4.5 miles

Key Considerations:

- The segment contains a wide array of ORVs.
- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community within the segment might only be achieved through WSR designation.
- Sufficient flow for certain recreational boating activities might only be secured with water rights acquired through WSR designation.



SAN MIGUEL HYDROLOGIC UNIT

San Miguel River, Segment 3 was found to be *suitable* for WSR designation, with a classification of *Recreational*. Based on a recommendation by the RAC Subgroup, the eligibility classification was changed (from *Scenic*) due to the presence of the CC Ditch, two BLM campgrounds, and many mining claims along this stretch, as well as a dirt road running parallel to the river. In addition, the segment is popular for recreational gold mining. The Bennett property, as well as private land at the lower end of the segment, was excluded from the suitability recommendation.

Public Interest in Designation

The segment received much support for and opposition to suitability, with supporters identifying the outstanding setting and stream-related values within the corridor and opponents expressing concern over potential restrictions on historic and future uses of water and the corridor.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Recreational

This San Miguel River segment offers a rare and extraordinary opportunity for primitive river recreation, as the riparian surroundings transition from the Rocky Mountain physiographic region of the upper San Miguel to the Colorado Plateau physiographic region of the lower San Miguel. River recreation in this section includes rafting, kayaking and trout fishing, as part of long day or multi-day trips.

With few developments and one minor dirt road not visible from the river, this section appears mostly primitive and natural. Several primitive BLM campsites dot the shoreline, and two developed campgrounds with boat ramps, toilets and picnic facilities are located along the lower third of the reach. Exceptionally good “play waves” form in the Ledges area during spring runoff and are sought by kayakers, who consider them to be some of the best natural features of their kind in the state.

This and the adjacent upstream segment support the San Miguel’s best population of self-sustaining trout. The

entire reach lies within the San Miguel Special Recreation Management Area, used by private and commercial river runners and trout fishers.

Fish

This segment harbors exemplary populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth suckers (*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluehead suckers (*Catostomus discobolus*), and roundtail chubs (*Gila robusta*).

Wildlife

Portions of the river corridor in this segment represent one of the finest areas of protected Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat in the United States. The Southwest Canyon Riparian Habitat is recognized as the richest terrestrial bird habitat type in North America, providing breeding sites for a wide variety of bird species and primary migratory routes for nearly all songbirds throughout the western United States. More than 300 bird species have been observed in the San Miguel River corridor. The expanding Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) population has been moving up the San Miguel River, as evidenced by a nest found at the Highway 90 Bridge at Piñon (National Audubon Society 2010).

Vegetation

This reach supports a superior (A-ranked) occurrence of sandbar willow (*Salix exigua/mesic graminoids*) riparian shrubland, ranked as secure globally (G5). The segment is included in the San Miguel River at Cottonwood Creek Potential Conservation Area.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of the lower San Miguel River and Dolores River downstream. There is no instream flow water right on the segment, so changes or enlargements to existing water rights or new water rights on private property could further diminish flow.

Four absolute water rights within the segment divert up to 153 cfs for irrigation and municipal use. An instream flow right associated with WSR designation could limit the ability to change points of diversion on existing water rights.

The Highline Canal diversion (decreed for 145 cfs) is located downstream of the upper terminus and parallels the San Miguel River for most of the segment. The canal is senior to most other water rights and is primarily used for crop irrigation downstream in late summer, when irrigation demand is high and snowmelt has diminished.

While there are no existing impoundments within the segment, Trout Lake and Hope Lake impound water upstream on the Lake Fork tributary. In addition, there are a few off-channel impoundments associated with Cascabel Ranch.

Colorado Decision Support System HydroBase estimates indicate that there are more than 204,000 acre-feet of conditional water storage rights upstream of the segment, on both the mainstem and tributaries. Much of the water needed to meet future demand is likely to come from conservation practices and development of existing water rights, including conditional rights in the San Miguel

Basin. Most of these rights would be senior to any instream flow created through WSR designation.

Given current construction costs and concerns over environmental impacts, dam sites identified on the mainstem may be difficult to develop. One such site is the Saltado Reservoir on the San Miguel River downstream of Specie Creek, with a conditional water right for fill and refill totaling over 140,000 acre-feet.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

This 4.5-mile stretch of the San Miguel River consists entirely of BLM-administered land.

Special Designations

WSR designation would be consistent with the existing Special Recreation Management Area designation.

ROWS and Withdrawals

Transco and Rocky Mountain Natural Gas pipelines, two Tri-State transmission lines, and one distribution powerline cross the segment. The Highline Canal, telephone lines, and a county road parallel the segment. There is a private access road one-quarter to one-half mile to the west and a water pipeline within one-quarter mile to the north.

While portions of the segment are within an area classified as having Waterpower and Reservoir Resources the Powersite Classification does not preclude WSR designations.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

According to a State of Colorado Oil and Gas Commission electronic well records database, there are existing oil and gas leases within the segment, as well as two abandoned oil and gas wells. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

A streamflow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community for this segment might only be achieved through WSR designation. Designation would complement BLM Colorado Public Land Health Standards for riparian vegetation, special status species, and wildlife.

River flow needed to support certain recreational boating activities might only be secured through water rights associated with WSR designation.

This segment of the San Miguel supports habitat for native warm water fish, making WSR designation consistent with actions in the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*). Depletion of flow by the Highline Canal might inhibit the ability to sustain the Fish ORV, as well as the Vegetation ORV.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for

signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs associated with administering and managing this segment for the Recreational, Fish, Wildlife, and Vegetation ORVs are estimated to be moderately higher than current funding levels. The segment is managed as a Special Recreation Management Area, which has provided some funding for facilities and maintenance to protect the ORVs.

With easy access to the river corridor provided by a county road running parallel to the river, visitor use could increase if designated and additional funding for facilities would likely be needed. If purchased from willing sellers, private land parcels within the corridor would have added value for ORV protection.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

While WSR designation would provide the most comprehensive protection for the ORVs, existing authorities provide some level of protection, including the Special Recreation Management Area designation, which emphasizes management for riparian and recreation values. Conservation easements for select private portions of the corridor could be pursued, potentially increasing protection for ORVs. Appropriation of a state-based instream flow water right through the segment would also help to sustain the ORVs.

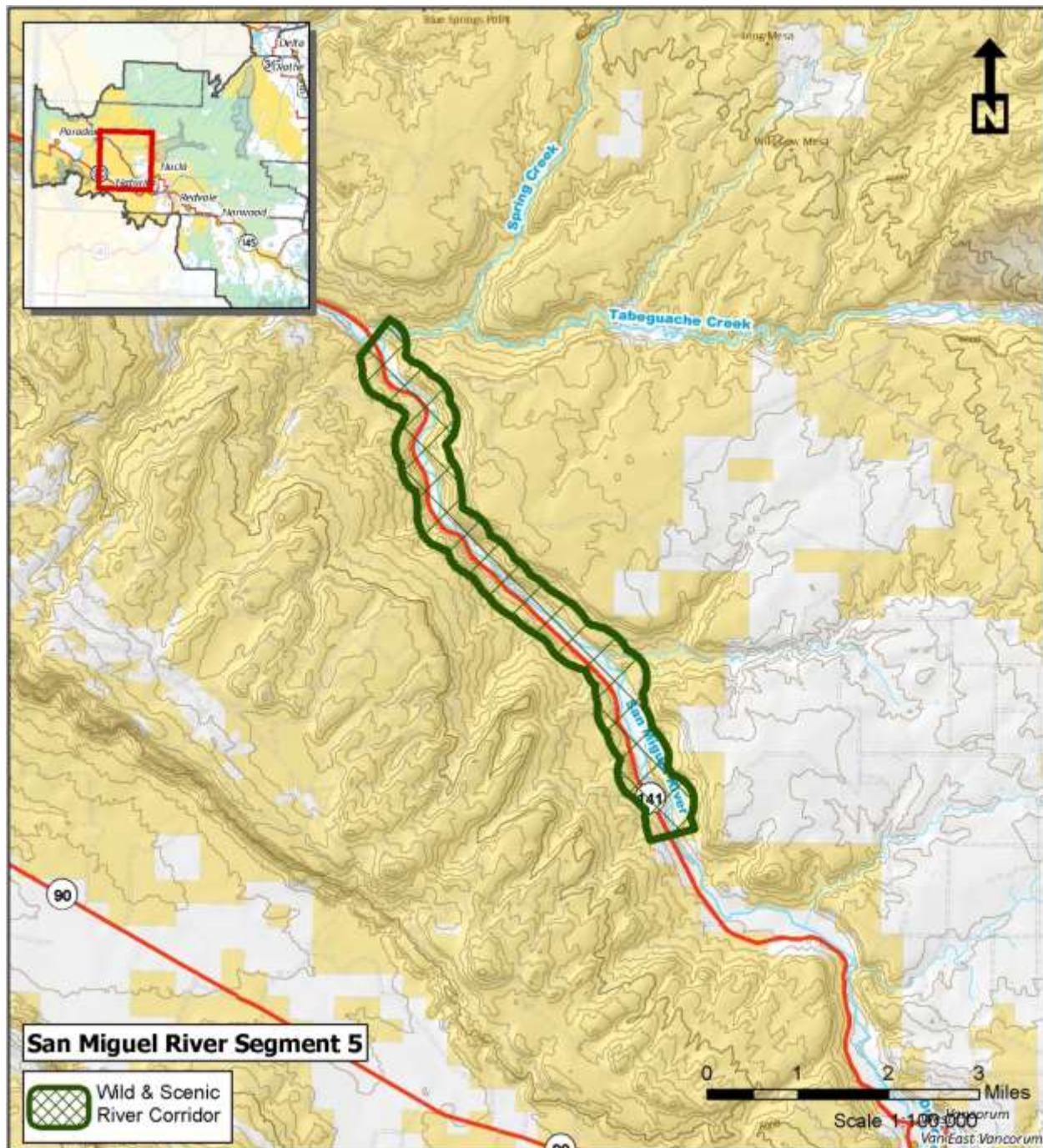


FIGURE 11 - (21) SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT 5

San Miguel River, Segment 5 was found to be *suitable* for VSR designation, with a classification of *Recreational*. Based on recommendations by the RAC Subgroup, the segment was reduced from its eligible length to begin downstream from the Richards property, run the length of The Nature Conservancy property, and terminate at the confluence with Tabeguache Creek. In addition, the boundaries of the protective corridor were delineated to extend rim to rim, using existing developments and natural barriers.

Public Interest in Designation

The segment received much support for and opposition to suitability, with supporters highlighting the important river-related values within the corridor and opponents expressing concern over potential restrictions on access and historic and future uses of water and the corridor.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Recreational

This section of the San Miguel River provides exceptional opportunities for sightseeing and photography along the Unaweep-Tabeguache Byway. The byway is marketed to visitors from within Colorado, out of state, and internationally by the Unaweep-Tabeguache Byway Committee and by the Colorado Office of Tourism. This section of the byway focuses on the San Miguel River and its associated historic sites and surrounding landscape.

Fish

This segment supports exemplary populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*). This segment contains an intact native fishery and is regionally one of the best examples of a remnant native fishery. In addition, this segment was historically occupied by Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), a federally endangered species.

21 ~ SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT 5



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Recreational

ORVs: Recreational, Fish, Historic, Vegetation

Suitable Length: 7.5 miles

BLM-Administered: 1.3 miles

Key Considerations:

- Water yield contributes significantly to the proper hydrologic function of the Lower Dolores River downstream.
- A stream flow regime that mimics the natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community might only be attainable through VSR designation.
- The Nature Conservancy is the principal landowner and has expressed strong support for VSR designation of the segment.
- The CWCB has declared its intent to appropriate a state instream flow for the lower San Miguel River.

SAN MIGUEL HYDROLOGIC UNIT

Historic

This stretch of river marks the beginning of the historic Hanging Flume, one of the premier 19th century engineering accomplishments in the west. The thirteen-mile flume was constructed above the Dolores and San Miguel rivers over a three-year period in the late 1800s to supply water to a hydraulic placer gold mining operation. The structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, and was listed as one of Colorado's Most Endangered Places in 1999. In addition, the flume is listed on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties, the World Heritage Fund list of most endangered places and the 2006 World Monument Fund Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites.

Vegetation

The segment lies within the San Miguel River at Tabeguache Creek Potential Conservation Area and supports New Mexico privet riparian shrubland (*Forestiera pubescens*), Fremont cottonwood/skunkbush sumac riparian woodland (*Populus deltoides* ssp. *wislizeni*/*Rhus trilobata*), and skunkbush sumac riparian shrubland (*Rhus trilobata*), all ranked as globally imperiled (G2).

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through San Miguel River, Segment 5 contributes to the proper hydrologic function of the Lower Dolores River. In January 2011, the CWCB announced its intention to appropriate an instream flow for the lower San Miguel River (from the confluence of Calamity Draw to the confluence with the Dolores River) of 325 cfs (from April 15 to June 14), 170 cfs (from June 15 to July 31), 115 cfs (from August 1 to August 31), 80 cfs (from September 1 to February 28), and 115 cfs (from March 1 to April 14) structured to benefit the propagation of three native warm water fish species. The appropriation was upheld at a hearing on September 13, 2011.

While no existing impoundments occur within the segment, there are a few small impoundments upstream (including Trout Lake and Hope Lake on the Lake Fork tributary), and a few off-channel impoundments associated with Cascabel Ranch.

The segment contains approximately six water diversions, at least two (San Miguel Power Company Canal and Johnson Ditch) of which were owned by Umetco Minerals Corporation and donated to the CWCB for other than decreed uses. Decision on the fate of these water rights is pending, but potential future uses include conveying a portion to Montrose County or local governments within the San Miguel Basin, and donating a portion to an instream flow right in the lower San Miguel River. Future use of these rights could result in changes to existing points of diversion.

According to Colorado Decision Support System HydroBase estimates, there are over 349,000 acre-feet of conditional storage water rights upstream of the segment, on either the mainstem or tributaries of the San Miguel River. If developed, these water rights would be senior to any instream flow or federal water right and could further diminish flow.

Much of the water needed to meet future regional demand would be derived through conservation practices and development of existing water rights, including conditional water rights in the San Miguel Basin. Most of these conditional water rights are senior to both existing instream flow water rights and any instream flow created through WSR designation.

The 2004 Statewide Water Supply Initiative identified future potential dam sites on the San Miguel River (downstream of Leopard Creek near the confluence with Beaver Creek and above Horsefly Creek) and major tributaries, including Horsefly Creek and Maverick Draw. According to a draft BLM San Miguel Instream Flow Assessment, dam sites identified on the mainstem are unlikely to be developed, given current costs and concerns with environmental impacts. The assessment included Saltado Reservoir on the San Miguel River downstream of Specie Creek, with a fill and refill right totaling over 140,000 acre-feet.

An instream flow or federal water right associated with WSR designation could restrict new water rights or changes to existing water rights.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

ROWS and Withdrawals

ROWS within the corridor include Colorado State Highway 141, several county roads, telephone and power lines, an historic irrigation ditch, and a water pipeline.

A bat maternity roost withdrawal is located in an abandoned uranium mine along the river.

While portions of this segment are within an area classified as having Waterpower and Reservoir Resources the Powersite Classification does not preclude WSR designation.

Energy and Mineral Resources

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would complement the public land health standard for riparian vegetation and special status species. This segment supports habitat for native warm water fishes, and designation would be consistent with actions in the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

The Nature Conservancy is the principal landowner within the corridor and supports WSR designation and working with the BLM to manage the segment ORVs.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

The segment is paralleled by State Highway 141, part of the Unaweep-Tabeguache Scenic and Historic Byway. The highway provides easy access to the river corridor, and if designated, visitor use along the byway could be expected to increase somewhat.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

While WSR designation would provide the most comprehensive protection for the ORVs, The Nature Conservancy ownership affords protections. If confirmed by the water court, an instream flow water right appropriated by the CWCB in September 2011 would help sustain the Fish and Vegetation ORVs.

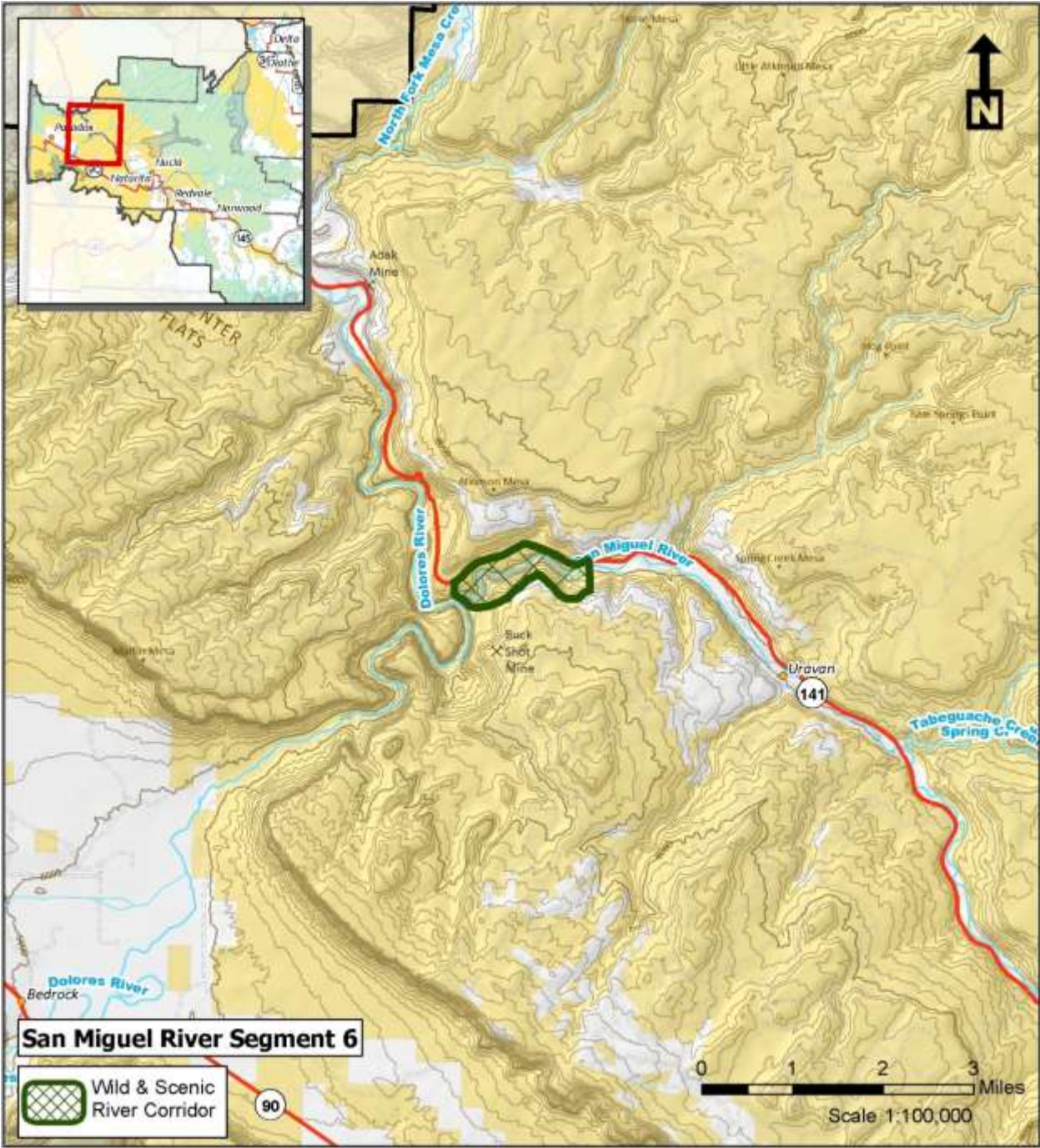


FIGURE 12 - (22) SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT 6

22 ~ SAN MIGUEL RIVER, SEGMENT 6



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Recreational

ORVs: Recreational, Fish, Historic, Vegetation

Suitable Length: 2.1 miles

BLM-Administered: 2.1 miles

Key Considerations:

- A stream flow regime that mimics the natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community might only be attainable through WSR designation.
- Water yield contributes significantly to the proper hydrologic function of the Lower Dolores River downstream.
- The CWCBC has declared its intent to appropriate a state instream flow for the lower San Miguel River.



SAN MIGUEL HYDROLOGIC UNIT

San Miguel River, Segment 6 was found to be *suitable* for WSR designation, with a classification of *Recreational*. Based on a recommendation from the RAC Subgroup, the segment was redelineated to begin downstream of Umetco Minerals Corporation property and terminate at the confluence with the Dolores River.

Public Interest in Designation

The segment received substantial support for and opposition to suitability, with supporters highlighting protection of the riparian ecosystem and river-related values within the corridor and opponents expressing concern over potential restrictions on historic and future uses of water and the corridor.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Recreational

This section of the San Miguel River provides exceptional opportunities for sightseeing and photography along the Unaweep-Tabeguache Byway. The byway is marketed to visitors from within Colorado, as well as out of state and internationally by the Unaweep-Tabeguache Byway Committee and by the Colorado Office of Tourism. This section of the byway focuses on the river and surrounding landscape, as well as associated historic sites.

Fish

This river segment contains exemplary populations of Bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), flannelmouth sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*), and roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*), all BLM and Colorado sensitive warm water fish species. The species are regionally important within the reach due to population numbers and the lack of non-native fish. In addition, the reach was historically occupied by the Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), a federally endangered species.

Historic

One of the premier engineering accomplishments of the 19th century in the west, remnants of the historic Hanging Flume dot the canyon walls along this stretch of the San Miguel. The thirteen-mile flume was built in the late

1800s to supply water to a hydraulic placer gold mining operation on the Dolores River near Roc Creek. The structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, and was listed as one of Colorado's Most Endangered Places in 1999. In addition, the flume is listed on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties, the World Heritage Fund's list of most endangered places and the 2006 World Monument Fund Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites.

Historic uranium mining buildings and shafts can also be found along this stretch, many of which have been evaluated and found to be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion A*.

Vegetation

This riparian zone contains New Mexico privet riparian shrubland (*Forestiera pubescens*), which is currently ranked as globally imperiled (G2). The reach is included within the Uravan West Potential Conservation Area and is considered by CNHP to have outstanding significance.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through San Miguel, Segment 6 contributes to the proper hydrologic function of the Lower Dolores River.

In January 2011, the CWCB announced its intention to appropriate an instream flow for the lower San Miguel River (from the confluence of Calamity Draw to the confluence with the Dolores River) of 325 cfs (from April 15 to June 14), 170 cfs (from June 15 to July 31), 115 cfs (from August 1 to August 31), 80 cfs (from September 1 to February 28), and 115 cfs (from March 1 to April 14) structured to benefit the propagation of three native warm water fish species. The appropriation was upheld at a hearing on September 13, 2011.

While there are no existing impoundments within the segment, there are a few small impoundments upstream (including Trout Lake and Hope Lake on the Lake Fork tributary) and a few off-channel impoundments associated with Cascabel Ranch.

There are a few small impoundments upstream of the segment (including Trout Lake and Hope Lake) located on the Lake Fork tributary.

According to Colorado Decision Support System HydroBase estimates, there are more than 349,000 acre-feet of conditional storage water rights upstream of the segment, on either the mainstem or tributaries of the San Miguel River. If developed, these water rights would be senior to any instream flow or federal water right on this segment and could further diminish flow through this reach.

Much of the water needed to meet future demand would come from conservation practices and development of existing water rights, including some of the existing conditional water rights in the San Miguel Basin. Most of these conditional water rights are senior to both existing instream flow water rights and any instream flow created through WSR designation.

2004 Statewide Water Supply Initiative identified future potential dam sites on the San Miguel River (downstream of Leopard Creek near the confluence with Beaver Creek, and above Horsefly Creek) and major tributaries, including Horsefly Creek and Maverick Draw. Given current construction

costs and concerns over environmental impacts, dam sites identified on the mainstem may be difficult to develop. This assessment includes Saltado Reservoir on the San Miguel River downstream of Specie Creek, with a conditional water right totaling over 140,000 acre-feet.

An instream flow or federal water right associated with WSR designation could restrict new water rights or changes to existing water rights.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

ROW and Withdrawals

ROWs within the corridor include Colorado State Highway 141, several county roads, telephone and powerlines, and an historic irrigation ditch and water pipeline.

While portions of the segment are within an area classified as having Waterpower and Reservoir Resources, the Powersite Classification does not preclude WSR designation.

Energy and Mineral Resources

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation for this segment complements BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards for riparian vegetation and, by supporting habitat for native warm water fishes, is consistent with the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs associated with administering and managing this segment for the Recreational, Fish, Historic, and Vegetation ORVs would be moderately to much higher than current funding levels. With easy access to the river corridor provided by the paralleling county road, visitor use would be expected to increase if designated. As a result, additional funding for facilities would likely be needed.

A county road currently infringes on the stream channel and riparian zone along portions of this reach. With future county plans to possibly widen the road, costly measures would be necessary to avoid additional impacts to the river corridor. If purchased from willing sellers, private lands in the upper reaches of the segment would add value for ORV protection.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

While WSR designation would provide the most comprehensive protection for the ORVs, conservation easements on select private portions of the corridor would offer added value toward

protecting the ORVs. If confirmed by the water court, an instream flow water right appropriated by the CWCB in September 2011 would help sustain the Recreation, Fish, and Vegetation ORVs.

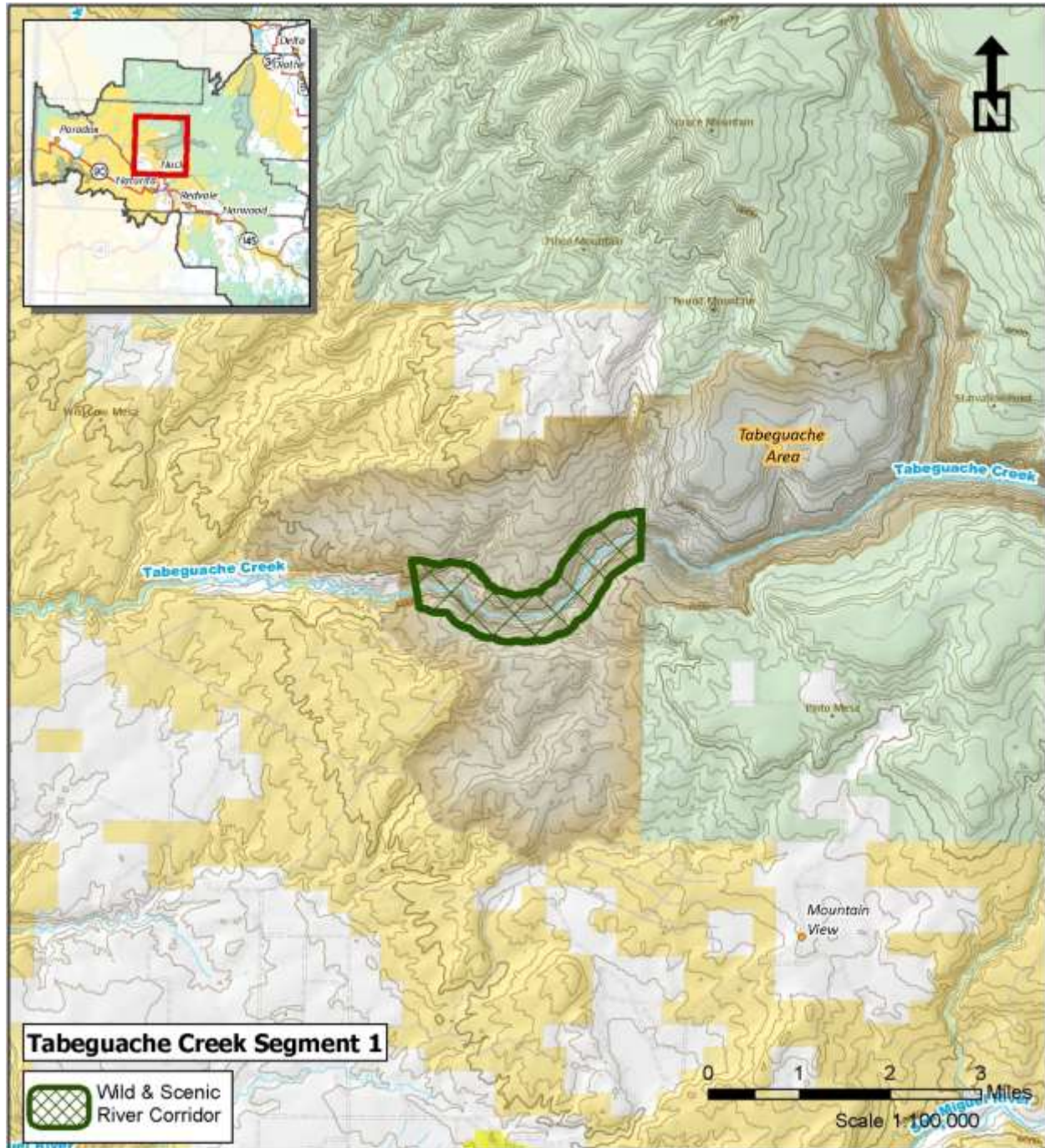


FIGURE 13 - (23) TABEGUACHE CREEK, SEGMENT I

Tabeguache Creek, Segment I was found to be suitable for WSR designation, with a classification of *Wild*. Based on the recommendation of the RAC Subgroup, the segment was redelineated to begin at the USFS boundary and end one-quarter mile from private property. The classification complements existing protections in the area, including designation as a specially managed “area,” and provides the BLM with an effective tool for managing the segment in support of the Vegetation ORV.

Public Interest in Designation

The segment received balanced support for and opposition to suitability, with supporters highlighting protection of the wild and natural values within the corridor and opponents expressing concern over impacts to private property and potential restrictions to use.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUE

Vegetation

This segment contains a superior (A-ranked) occurrence of narrowleaf cottonwood/skunkbush sumac riparian woodland (*Populus angustifolia/Rhus trilobata*), classified as vulnerable globally (G3). There is also a superior (A-ranked) occurrence of common sandbar willow/barren riparian shrubland (*Salix exigua/barren*). The entire segment lies within the CNHP-designated San Miguel River at Tabeguache Creek Potential Conservation Area.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of lower Tabeguache Creek and the lower San Miguel River downstream. An instream flow water right appropriation has been finalized for the segment. The instream flow would provide some protection to sustain the Vegetation ORV.

An irrigation diversion known as Skees Ditch was decreed for 1.92 cfs in 1939 by the State of Colorado, but no records are available indicating if and when it was constructed. A field assessment conducted by BLM personnel in May 2009 found no physical sign of a

23 ~TABEGUACHE CREEK, SEGMENT I



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Wild

ORV: Vegetation

Suitable Length: 3.4 miles

BLM-Administered: 3.4 miles

Key Considerations:

- Existing designation as a Special Management Area offers significant protection to sustain the Vegetation ORV.
- Limited water development in the upper Tabeguache Basin results in a flow regime that mimics natural conditions.
- A contiguous 3.7-mile upstream portion of Tabeguache Creek managed by the USFS is identified as eligible in the Proposed Land Management Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (2007), based upon Scenic and Cultural ORVs.



SAN MIGUEL HYDROLOGIC UNIT

diversion or ditch. Although the Skees Ditch has not been developed, it is considered an absolute water right by Colorado and would be senior to both the pending state instream flow and any federal instream flow resulting from WSR designation.

Glencoe Ditch in the Tabeguache headwaters is presently decreed to divert up to 17 cfs, and would have seniority over any instream or federal water right established as part of WSR designation. Changing the diversion point on an existing water right within the segment could be limited in the future by any instream flow right associated with WSR designation.

There are no impoundments or conditional water rights within the segment. Diversions totaling 22.18 cfs are decreed upstream of this segment. Conditional water rights upstream of the segment include 2.0 cfs for diversion and 30 acre-feet for storage.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

A contiguous 3.7-mile upstream portion of Tabeguache Creek managed by the USFS is identified as eligible in the Proposed Land Management Plan for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (2007), based upon Scenic and Cultural ORVs.

Special Designations

This segment and the contiguous USFS segment are within the Tabeguache Area, an area withdrawn by Congress and managed to protect wilderness values. Due to the designation, the only foreseeable actions within the segment are likely to be BLM-proposed projects. Access is limited to non-mechanized and non-motorized use.

ADMINISTRATION

The source water area upstream of this segment is primarily managed by the USFS. Existing authorities provide adequate management capability to protect the streamflow and sustain the ORV.

WSR designation would be consistent with policies and authorities afforded by designation as a Special Management Area and would complement the BLM Colorado Public Land Health standard for riparian vegetation.

Tabeguache Creek contributes flow to the Lower San Miguel and Dolores Rivers, supporting habitat for native warm water fish. WSR designation would be consistent with actions in the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Administrative costs associated with managing this segment for the Vegetation ORV would not likely increase much above current levels. The segment is remote, has limited access along undeveloped trails, and the riparian zone is completely under federal management, factors that assist in protecting the ORV. Additional facilities would not be needed if designated. A small amount of additional funding would be needed for signage, public education, ranger patrolling, and maintenance.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The existing Tabeguache Area congressional designation and a state-based instream flow water right provide protection to sustain the Vegetation ORV. In addition, the watershed upstream of this segment is dominated by USFS lands also within the congressionally designated Area and having a state-based instream flow water right, both of which would aid in future management, administration, and preservation of the area.

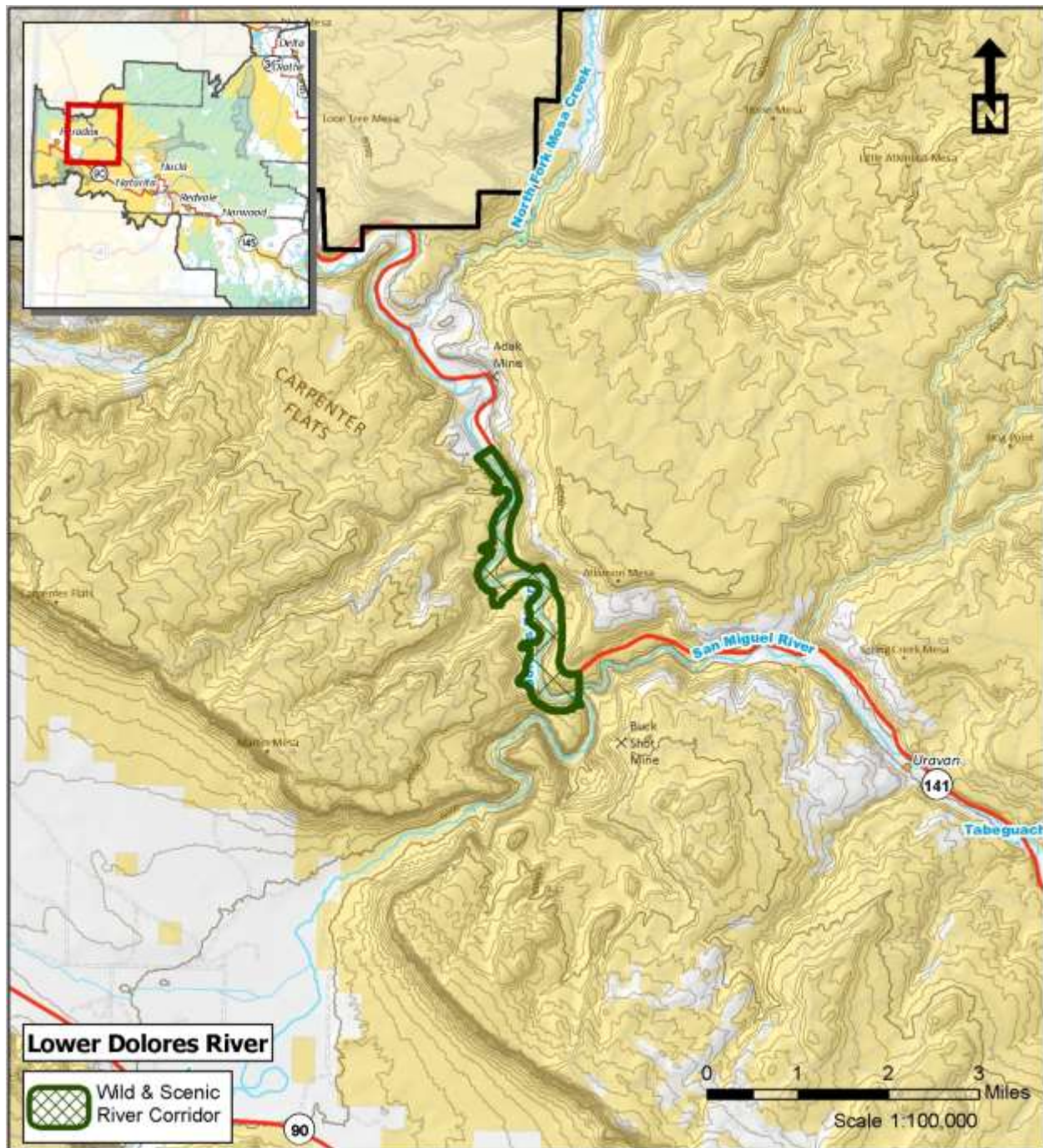


FIGURE 14 - (25) LOWER DOLORES RIVER

The Lower Dolores River segment was found to be *suitable* for VSR designation, with a classification of *Scenic*. Based on recommendations of the RAC Subgroup, the segment was shortened from its eligible length to end at and exclude the private Weimer property. In addition, the corridor boundary was modified to protect mining claims and delineated on the east side by the highway and on the west side by natural topographic features such as the canyon rim.

Public Interest in Designation

The segment received support for and moderate opposition to suitability, with supporters identifying the outstanding scenery and wild and natural setting and opponents (including the Montrose County Board of Commissioners) expressing concern over potential restrictions on historic and future uses of water and the corridor.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Scenic

An interdisciplinary BLM field inventory team evaluated the area and assigned a *Scenic Quality Classification of A*. The following observations were derived from their field notes: A highly varied landscape marked by prominent cliffs, strong vertical relief and interesting erosional patterns, make the Dolores River a visually remarkable area. Exceptional views of adjacent scenery complete the stunning scene. The colors in the area, consisting of greens, yellows, oranges, tans, reds, browns and grays, are rich and varied. Cultural modifications consist of power lines, a recreation site, and Colorado Highway 141 that do not detract greatly from the scenery.

From the mouth of the San Miguel River downstream to the confluence with Red Canyon, the river meanders through a narrow canyon bounded by sheer red rock walls. The scenic value created by the river flowing within the canyon is rare in the region of comparison. The section downstream from the confluence with Red

25 ~ LOWER DOLORES RIVER



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Scenic

ORVs: Scenic, Recreational, Geologic, Fish, Wildlife

Suitable Length: 4.2 miles

BLM-Administered: 4.2 miles

Key Considerations:

- Flow through the segment is significantly diminished by the operation of McPhee Dam upstream.
- The segment contains a wide array of ORVs.
- The remaining suitable portion of the segment consists of BLM-administered public land with exceptional redrock canyon scenery.



LOWER DOLORES HYDROLOGIC UNIT

Canyon opens to broken ledges and slopes, and does not merit the same outstandingly remarkable scenic quality.

Recreational

This section of the Dolores River provides exceptional opportunities for sightseeing and photography along the Unaweep-Tabeguache Byway. The byway is marketed to visitors from within Colorado, out of state, and internationally by the Unaweep-Tabeguache Byway Committee and by the Colorado Office of Tourism. This section of the byway focuses on the Dolores River and its associated historic sites and surrounding landscape. The river provides extraordinary opportunities for rafting, kayaking and canoeing in a spectacular redrock canyon. With only a handful of comparable opportunities spread across the entire Colorado Plateau, this is an outstanding section of water.

Geologic

The Dolores River has a well-defined entrenched meander channel pattern through this area, with exposures of Triassic-age Chinle, Wingate, and Kayenta formations. The river has been superimposed upon the Colorado Plateau geology as the region has undergone uplifting. Initially the river established a meandering pattern and as the area rose, the river cut down in this channel until the pattern became well entrenched. Now the river cannot easily cut across the meander bends to create oxbow lakes, as many unentrenched rivers do. Over time, as the river downcuts, it exposes underlying rock formations, usually in the form of resistant redrock sandstone cliffs. The Chinle, Wingate, and Kayenta formations all exhibit this cliff-forming erosional characteristic.

Fish

This segment harbors exemplary populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth suckers (*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluehead suckers (*Catostomus discobolus*), and roundtail chubs (*Gila robusta*). In addition, this segment was historically occupied by Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), a federally endangered species.

Wildlife

This river segment provides exceptionally high quality habitat for peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), and is considered a regionally important area for this rare BLM sensitive species. In 1999, the peregrine was delisted from threatened status under the Endangered Species Act. The BLM monitors the status of peregrine populations to ensure their continued recovery. Peregrine falcons are closely associated with steep-walled canyons and often nest near perennial water sources that support prey populations such as waterfowl, songbirds, and shorebirds. Peregrine pairs were observed along this segment as recently as 2008 and 2009, and breeding/nesting activity has been confirmed along this segment. Several established peregrine territories also occur in the vicinity.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of the Lower Dolores River downstream (within the Grand Junction Field Office). There is no instream flow water right protection on the segment. An instream flow right associated with VSR designation could restrict the ability to change points of diversion on existing water rights within the segment.

There are no conditional water rights or impoundments within the segment. Two small diversions along the lower reaches of the segment do not detract from the natural character of the river.

Flow through the segment is greatly diminished by the operation of the McPhee Dam upstream. A large portion of natural water yield entering the reservoir is transferred out of the basin, primarily for agricultural uses. Water rights associated with the McPhee Reservoir are senior to the instream flow water right on the downstream reach.

Most future water demand will be met through conservation practices and development of existing water rights. According to the 2004 Statewide Water Supply Initiative, between 400,000 and 500,000 acre-feet of conditional storage water rights upstream throughout the San Miguel and Upper Dolores basins predate any future state or federal instream flow right. As rights are perfected to meet future water demand, flows through the segment could be diminished. Additional water developments for uses such as irrigation are likely to increase along with the growing population.

The 2004 Statewide Water Supply Initiative identified reservoir sites on Beaver Creek and Plateau Creek flowing into the McPhee Reservoir that could be operated to increase flows in the Dolores River below the McPhee Reservoir. Beaver Creek and Plateau Creek reservoir sites are a high priority for the Southwest Basins Roundtable of Colorado Interbasin Compact Committee.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

ROWs and Withdrawals

ROWs within the segment include telephone lines, powerlines, a highway, county roads, private access roads, and a gravel pit.

While public lands adjacent to the river are withdrawn to the Department of Energy as a potential Power Site, the Powersite classification does not preclude WSR designation.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

Because of limited unappropriated water, it is unlikely that the high flows needed to sustain recreational activities could be secured through WSR designation.

Managing this segment to sustain native warm water fish is consistent with actions in the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

WSR designation would complement BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards for special status species and wildlife.

The BLM Grand Junction Field Office has identified the Dolores River segments within its jurisdiction as eligible, but will not make any decisions regarding suitability until its draft resource management plan is published.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

The costs for administering and managing this segment for the Scenic, Recreational, Geologic, Fish, and Wildlife ORVs would be substantially higher than current funding levels. The lower portion of this segment is paralleled by State Highway 141, providing diffuse access points to this portion of the river corridor. If designated, the potential increase in visitor use, especially in the lower portion of the corridor, would require additional funding for facilities, public education, signage, additional weed control, and ranger patrolling. Visitor use in the upper portion of the segment would be limited to mostly river-based recreation activities which would require a small amount of additional funding for maintenance and primitive camp and day use site development.

If purchased from willing sellers, private land parcels within the corridor would have added value for ORV protection.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

Warm water fish would receive protection by acquiring a state-based instream flow water right for this segment.

The Visual Resource Management classification of the segment could be upgraded to protect the Scenic ORV.

The Hanging Flume receives protection through listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

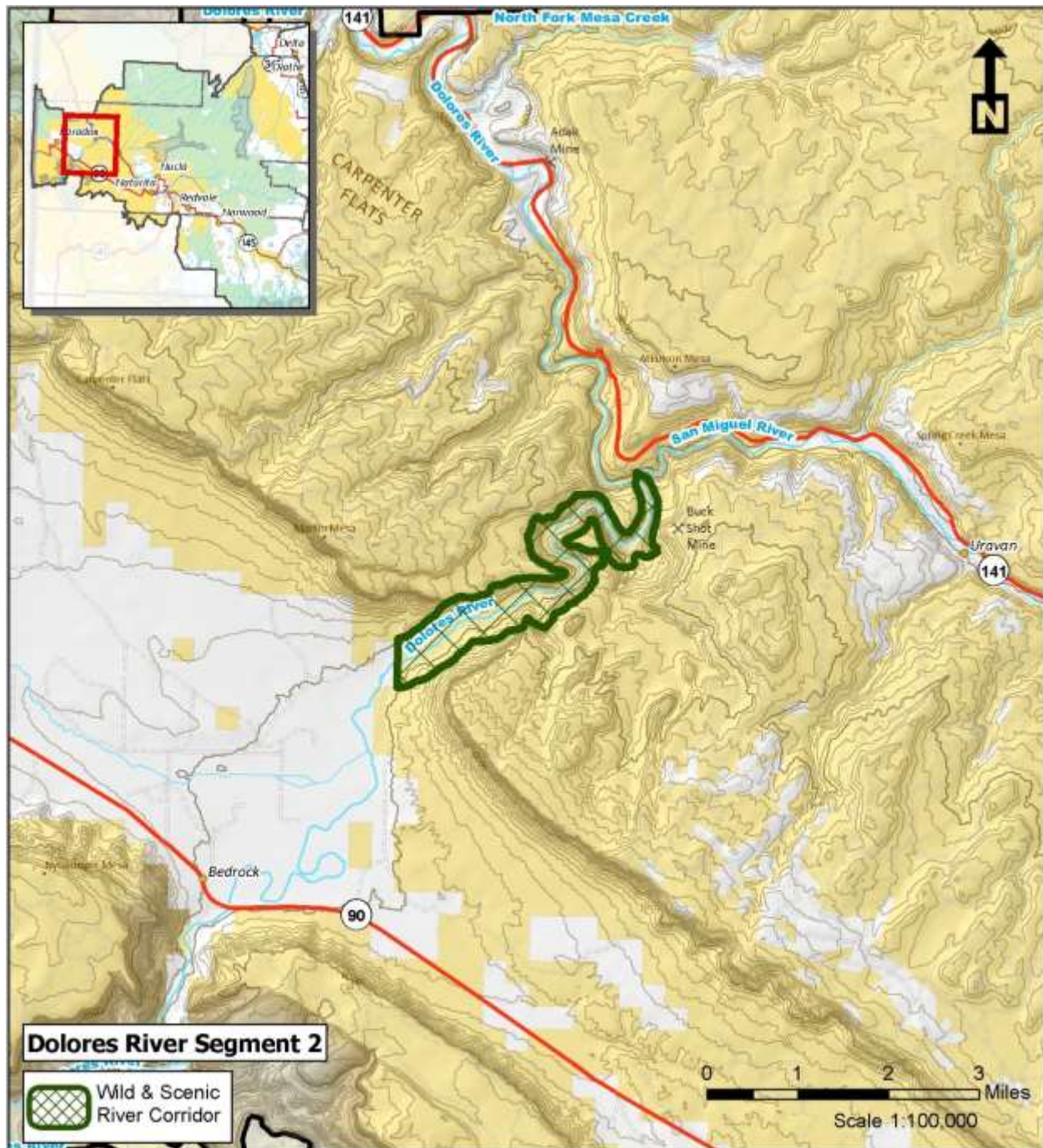


FIGURE 15 - (27) DOLORES RIVER, SEGMENT 2

27 ~ DOLORES RIVER, SEGMENT 2



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Recreational

ORVs: Scenic, Recreational, Geologic, Fish, Wildlife, Vegetation

Suitable Length: 5.3 miles

BLM-Administered: 5.3 miles

Key Considerations:

- A series of alluvial water wells adjacent to the river are managed by the BOR as part of the Paradox Valley Unit, Salinity Control Project.
- The segment contains a wide array of ORVs.
- The upstream portion of the segment is dominated by private land, while the downstream portion is comprised primarily of public land with little development.
- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community for this segment might only be achieved through WSR designation.

UPPER DOLORES HYDROLOGIC UNIT

Based upon providing protection for the numerous and varied ORVs, the 5.3-mile downstream public land portion of Dolores River, Segment 2 was found to be *suitable* for WSR consideration, with a classification of *Recreational*. Suitability was not supported for the 6.2-mile private land portion upstream. In addition, the protective corridor was modified to exclude the Buck Shot Mine and associated ROW and to follow the cliff line if less than one-quarter mile from the river center.

Public Interest in Designation

The segment received much support for and moderate opposition to suitability, with supporters identifying the segment as the core of a regionally important river and opponents (including the Montrose County Board of Commissioners) expressing concern over potential restriction of water rights.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Scenic

An interdisciplinary BLM field inventory team evaluated the area and assigned the lower portion of this segment from where the river leaves the Paradox Valley downstream to the mouth of the San Miguel River a *Scenic Quality Classification of A*. The following observations were derived from field notes: A highly varied landscape marked by prominent cliffs, strong vertical relief, and interesting erosional patterns, make the Dolores River a visually remarkable area. Exceptional views of adjacent scenery complete the stunning scene. Spectacular landforms, water, and vegetation of rich and varied color combine to create one of the most dramatic canyons in Western Colorado. A small, dirt road paralleling the river in the lower section detracts only minimally from the scenic quality.

Recreational

When releases from McPhee Dam allow, the lower five miles of this reach offer rare and outstanding opportunities for rafting, kayaking, and canoeing in a deep, meandering redrock canyon. With only a handful of rivers

on the Colorado Plateau possessing such qualities, the Dolores River attracts boaters from across the western United States.

Geologic

The Paradox Basin is a northwest, southeast trending geologic structural anticline that has at its core the Pennsylvanian-age Paradox Formation, a halitic evaporite. Over time, water has partially dissolved the salt core, causing the axis of the anticline to collapse and creating a valley with walls that dip away in either direction. The Dolores River has carved a channel across and perpendicular to this collapsed valley, forming the geological paradox for which the valley is named.

After traversing the Paradox Valley and exiting toward the north, the Dolores River follows a well-defined and exemplary entrenched meander channel. Initially the slow-moving river established its meandering pattern. As the Colorado Plateau uplifted, the accelerated flow continued to downcut within this same channel until the pattern became entrenched. Now the river cannot easily cut across these meander bends to form oxbow lakes, as many unentrenched rivers do. As the river carves slowly downward through Triassic-age strata of the Chinle Group, Wingate Sandstone, and Kayenta Formation, it exposes resistant red sandstone cliffs.

Fish

This river segment supports populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth suckers (*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluehead suckers (*Catostomus discobolus*), and roundtail chubs (*Gila robusta*). In addition, this segment was historically occupied by Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), a federally endangered species.

Wildlife

This river segment provides exceptionally high quality habitat for peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), and is considered a regionally important area for this rare BLM sensitive species. In 1999, the peregrine was delisted from threatened status under the Endangered Species Act. The BLM monitors the status of peregrine populations to ensure their continued recovery. Peregrine falcons are closely associated with steep-walled canyons and often nest near perennial water sources that support prey populations such as waterfowl, songbirds, and shorebirds. Peregrine breeding/nesting activity has been confirmed along this segment. Active territories and nests occur within this reach. In addition, the BLM sensitive canyon treefrog (*Hyla arenicolor*) occupies portions of this stretch.

Vegetation

This segment contains areas of New Mexico privet riparian shrubland (*Forestiera pubescens*), which is classified as globally imperiled (G2).

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes greatly to the proper hydrologic function of the Lower Dolores River downstream. The CWCB holds a year-round 78 cfs instream flow water right along the entire segment, structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable degree, which also provides some protection to sustain the ORVs.

There are no conditional water rights within the segment. The only withdrawals are a series of alluvial wells along the corridor that are operated as part of Paradox Valley Unity, Deep Well Injection Salinity Control Project.

Flow is greatly diminished by the operation of the McPhee Dam upstream. A large portion of natural water yield entering the reservoir is transferred out of the basin, primarily for agricultural uses. Water rights associated with McPhee are senior to the instream flow water right.

The 2004 Statewide Water Supply Initiative identifies potential dam sites on Beaver Creek and Plateau Creek that flow into McPhee Reservoir and could be operated to increase flows below McPhee Reservoir. The Beaver Creek and Plateau Creek sites are a high priority for the Southwest Basins Roundtable of the Colorado Interbasin Compact Committee.

According to the initiative, most future water demand would come from conservation practices and development of existing water rights, including some 141,000 acre feet of conditional water rights in the basin. Many conditional rights are senior to both existing instream flow water rights and any instream flow resulting from WSR designation.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

ROWs and Withdrawals

BLM ROWs within the corridor include a Montrose County road, telephone and powerlines, and the Bureau of Reclamation Paradox Valley Salinity Control Project, including an evaporative salt disposal pond.

While portions of the segment are within an area classified as having Waterpower and Reservoir Resources, the Powersite Classification does not preclude WSR designation.

Energy and Mineral Resources

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

A streamflow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community for this segment might only be achieved through WSR designation.

A Montrose County road located within the corridor may need to be upgraded and enlarged in the future.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs associated with administering and managing this segment for the Scenic, Recreation, Geologic, Fish, Wildlife, and riparian Vegetation ORVs would be moderately to much higher than

current funding levels. With easy access to the river corridor provided by the paralleling county road, visitor use would be expected to increase if designated. Additional funding would likely be needed for facilities and increased weed control.

A county road currently infringes on the stream channel and riparian zone along portions of this reach. With future county plans to possibly widen the road, costly measures would need to be employed to avoid additional impacts to the river corridor.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The current state-based instream flow water right for 78 cfs provides limited protection for the ORVs.

The Dolores River Working Group is proposing that the area be designated as a National Conservation Area.

The area is being proposed as a Special Recreation Management Area in one RMP alternative and as an Extensive Recreation Management Area in the preferred alternative. In addition, portions of the corridor are being proposed as an ACEC in one alternative.

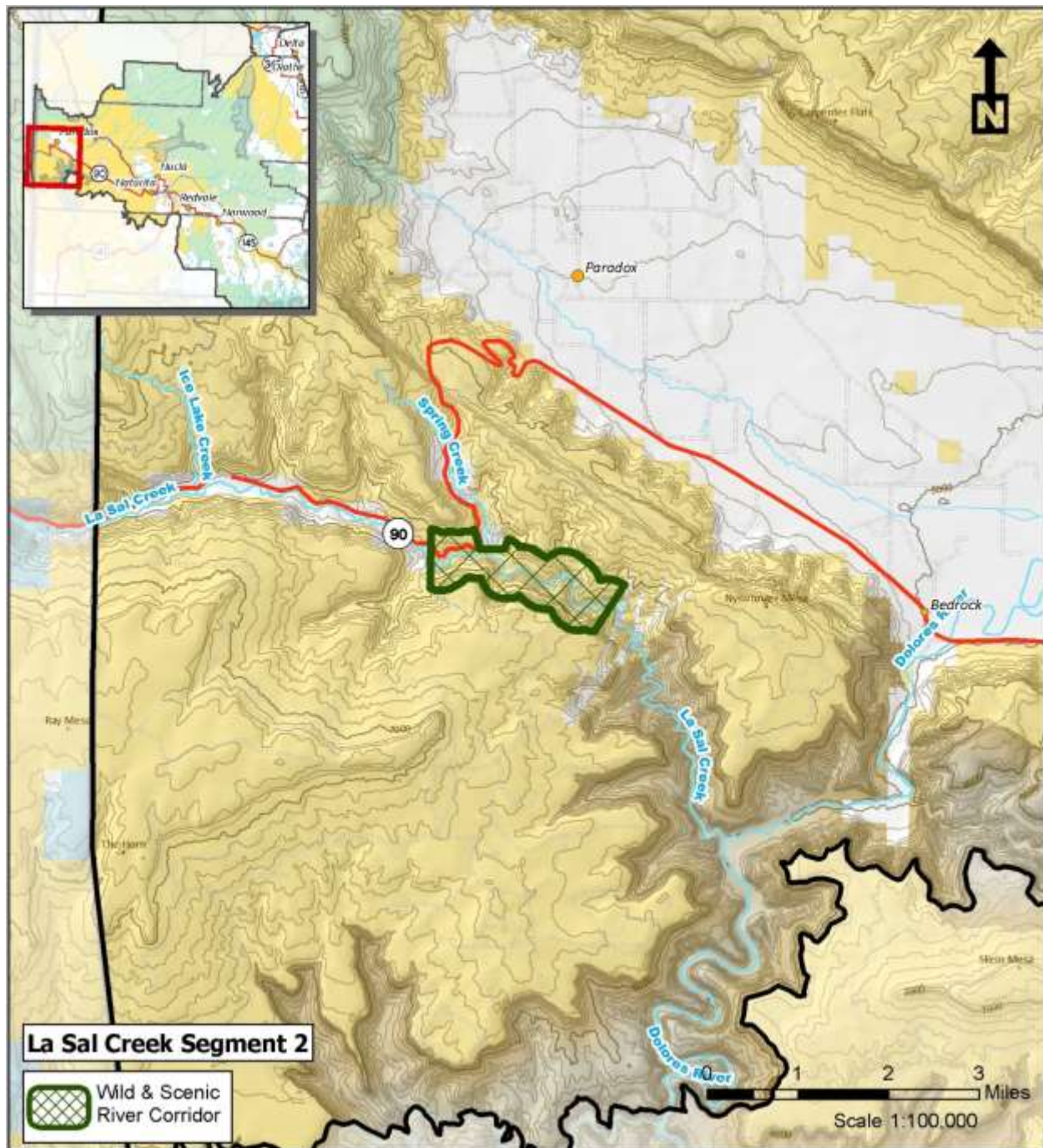


FIGURE 16 - (30) LA SAL CREEK, SEGMENT 2

La Sal Creek, Segment 2 was found to be *suitable* for WSR consideration, with a classification of *Recreational*. Based on recommendations from the RAC Subgroup, the eligibility classification was changed from *Scenic* to *Recreational* in order to accommodate potential future mining activities and road improvements and the segment length was reduced to end at and exclude the Cashin Mine.

Public Input

The segment received much support for and limited opposition to suitability, with supporters highlighting the healthy riparian ecosystem and opponents (including the Montrose County Board of Commissioners) expressing concern over potential restriction of water and mining uses.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Fish

This segment harbors exemplary populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth suckers (*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluehead suckers (*Catostomus discobolus*), and roundtail chubs (*Gila robusta*). This is one of a very few spawning tributaries for these species within the Dolores River Basin. The segment is largely intact, with native fish predominant over introduced species, and includes populations of native speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus*) and mottled sculpin (*Cottus bairdii*).

Vegetation

The entire length of this segment supports boxelder/river birch riparian woodland (*Acer negundo*/*Betula occidentalis*), which is currently ranked as globally imperiled (G2). The segment is included within the CNHP-designated La Sal Creek Potential Conservation Area.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of Lower La Sal Creek downstream.

30 ~ LA SAL CREEK, SEGMENT 2



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Recreational

ORVs: Fish, Vegetation

Suitable Length: 3.3 miles

BLM-Administered: 3.3 miles

Key Considerations:

- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community might only be achieved through WSR designation.
- Both the river segment and corridor consist primarily of public lands.



UPPER DOLORES HYDROLOGIC UNIT

The CWCB holds an instream flow water right along the entire segment decreed for 3 cfs (from December 15 to March 14), 5.1 cfs (from March 15 to June 14), and 1.2 cfs (from June 15 to December 14) and structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable degree. The flow would also provide some protection to sustain ORVs by limiting future water right actions within and upstream of the segment.

No absolute or conditional water rights occur within the segment. No impoundments occur within or upstream of the segment to the Colorado-Utah state line. Four ditch diversions are located upstream of the segment within La Sal Creek, Segment 1.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

The suitable portion of the corridor consists of BLM-administered public land.

ROWS

Numerous BLM ROW authorizations cross or run adjacent to the creek, including transmission powerlines, telephone lines, a CDOT highway, and a Montrose County road.

Energy and Mineral Resource

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would complement BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards for riparian vegetation and special status species.

A streamflow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community might only be achieved through WSR designation.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs for administering and managing this segment for the Recreation, Fish, and riparian Vegetation ORVs would be moderately higher than current funding levels. With easy access to the river corridor provided by a parallel-running county road, visitor use would be expected to increase if designated. Thus, additional funding would be needed for facilities, public education, signage, ranger patrolling, and maintenance.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The current state-based instream flow water right provides for some protection of the Fish and Vegetation ORVs.

An area encompassing the segment is being considered for ACEC designation in one RMP alternative.

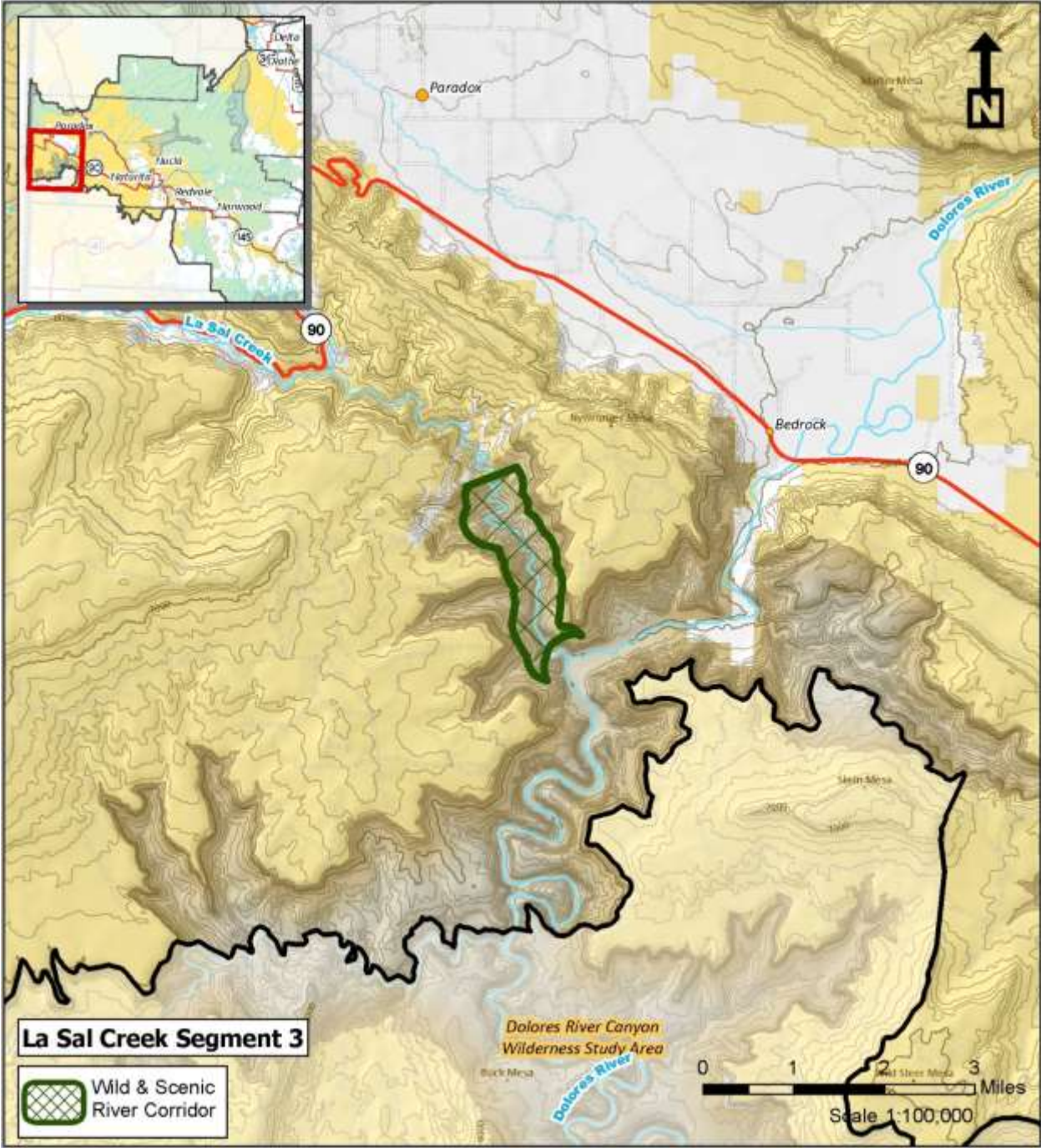


FIGURE 17 - (31) LA SAL CREEK, SEGMENT 3

31 ~ LA SAL CREEK, SEGMENT 3



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

Classification: Wild

ORVs: Scenic, Recreational,
Fish, Cultural, Vegetation

Suitable Length: 3.4 miles

BLM-Administered: 3.4 miles

Key Considerations:

- The entire segment is comprised of public land within the Dolores River Canyon Wilderness Study Area, facilitating effective management.
- The segment contains a wide array of ORVs.
- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community within the segment might only be accomplished through WSR designation.



UPPER DOLORES HYDROLOGIC UNIT

La Sal Creek, Segment 3 was found to be *suitable* for WSR designation, with a classification of *Wild*. The segment was reclassified due to the pristine, wild, and remote character of the area and the critical habitat the creek provides for warm water fish.

Public Input

The segment received considerable support for and limited opposition to suitability, with supporters highlighting protection of healthy riparian and aquatic ecosystems and opponents (including the Montrose County Board of Commissioners) expressing concern over potential restriction of water and mining uses.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

Scenic

An interdisciplinary BLM field inventory team evaluated the area and assigned a *Scenic Quality Classification of A*. The following observations were derived from their field notes: Massive rock outcrops and prominent cliffs are the stunning qualities of the La Sal Creek area. The creek flows constant and swift. The rocks and box elder-river birch vegetation create an area of strong contrasts in color and relief consisting of greens, reds, yellows, oranges, grays, and browns. This area is visually exceptional and was determined to be rare within the region.

Recreational

This narrow, deeply incised, and tightly meandering canyon provides superior opportunities for hiking, wildlife observation, nature study, and photography in a high quality, primitive, densely vegetated riparian setting. BLM specialists have observed abundant signs of game species and large predators. The upper end of the segment can be reached by rough four-wheel drive road, while the lower end is accessible by boaters hiking up from the Dolores River.

Fish

This segment harbors exemplary populations of three BLM and Colorado sensitive species: flannelmouth suckers

(*Catostomus latipinnis*), bluehead suckers (*Catostomus discobolus*), and roundtail chubs (*Gila robusta*). The segment is one of only a very few spawning tributaries for these three species in the Dolores River Basin. In addition, this river segment supports two other native fishes: speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus*) and mottled sculpin (*Cottus bairdii*).

Cultural

Several large and significant petroglyph panels are located at the junction of La Sal Creek and the Dolores River. These panels represent cultural expressions ranging from Archaic hunting motifs dating from as early as 4,000 years ago to late period Anasazi figures from around AD 1000. These petroglyph panels have been recorded and evaluated as being eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under *Criteria C* and *D*.

Vegetation

This segment contains boxelder/river birch riparian woodland (*Acer negundo*/*Betula occidentalis*) along its entire length, which is currently ranked as globally imperiled (G2). The segment is included within the CNHP-designated La Sal Creek Potential Conservation Area.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes greatly to the proper hydrologic function of the Dolores River downstream.

The CWCB holds an instream flow water right along the entire segment, structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable extent. The water right is decreed for 3 cfs (from December 15 to March 14), 5.1 cfs (from March 15 to June 14), and 1.2 cfs (from June 15 to December 14), providing some protection to sustain the ORVs by limiting future water right actions within and upstream of the segment.

No absolute or conditional water rights occur in the segment. No impoundments occur within or upstream of the segment to the Colorado-Utah state line. Four ditch diversions occur upstream of the segment within La Sal Creek, Segment I.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

All surrounding federal lands are within the Dolores River Canyon WSA.

Approximately 0.9% of the corridor consists of private lands zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the General Agriculture Zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. Many of the uses are not related to agriculture and have the potential to conflict with the intent of the WSR Act.

WSR designation would complement BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards for riparian vegetation and special status species.

Special Designations

The entire segment is located within the Dolores River Canyon WSA. While the WSA affords interim protection for the ORVs, the designation is transitory and should not be relied upon for enduring protection.

ROWs and Withdrawals

There are no known ROWs within the segment.

While portions of the segment are within an area classified as having Waterpower and Reservoir Resources the Powersite Classification does not preclude WSR designation.

Energy and Mineral Resources

Because of the WSA designation, BLM-proposed projects are likely to constitute the only foreseeable development within the segment. Although lands under wilderness review continue to be subject to location under federal mining laws, location methods and subsequent assessment work are restricted to operations determined as meeting BLM non-impairment criteria.

ADMINISTRATION

A streamflow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community might only be accomplished through WSR designation.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The existing state-based instream flow water right is sufficient to sustain the warm water fishery, but may not be adequate for long-term sustainability of the Vegetation ORV.

The entire segment is located within the Dolores River Canyon WSA. The WSA designation affords some protection for the ORVs in accordance with the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review (H-8550-1).

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs for administering and managing this segment for the Scenic, Recreational, Fish, Cultural, and riparian Vegetation ORVs would be similar to slightly higher than current funding levels. The stream corridor is totally within the Dolores River Canyon WSA, is very remote and accessible only by an unmaintained non-motorized, non-mechanized trail, factors that assist in protection of the ORVs. The BLM presently incurs some costs in this area associated with implementing the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review. However, additional visitor use associated with WSR designation could generate the need for funding to develop staging facilities to support primitive recreation opportunities, signage, public education, ranger patrolling, and maintenance.

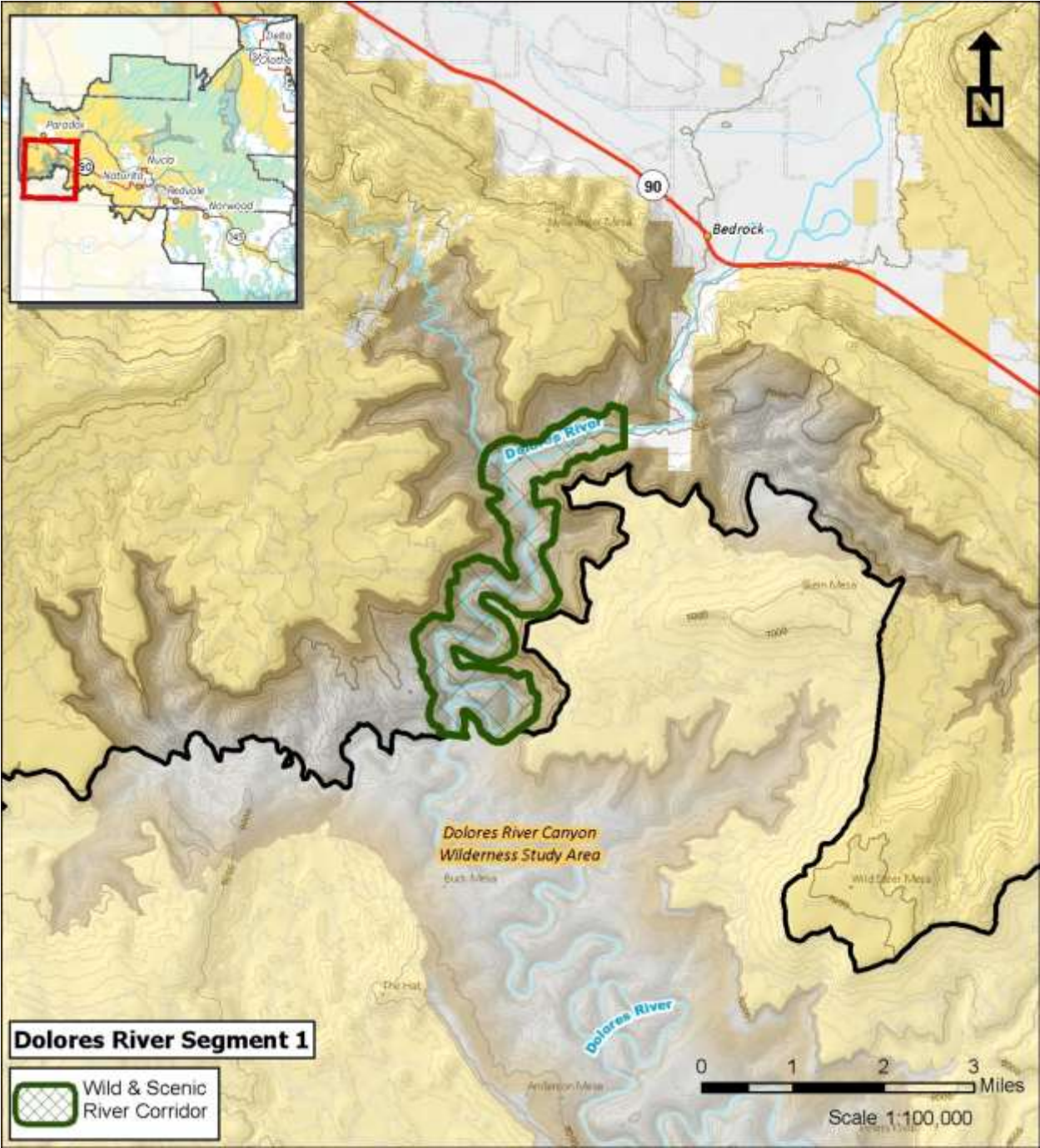


FIGURE 18 - (34) DOLORES RIVER, SEGMENT I

34 ~ DOLORES RIVER, SEGMENT I



~SUITABLE SEGMENT~

NOTE: The identification of ORVs and eligibility determination for this segment were made by the BLM Dolores Field Office.

Classification: Wild

ORVs: Recreation, Scenery, Fish, Wildlife, Geology, Ecology, Archaeology

Suitable Length: 8.7 miles

BLM-Administered: 8.7 miles

Key Considerations:

- A wide array of ORVs occurs within the segment.
- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community for the segment might only be secured through WSR designation.
- The segment is within the Dolores River Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA).



**UPPER DOLORES
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

The portion of Dolores River, Segment I classified as *Wild* by the BLM Dolores Field Office was found to be *suitable* for WSR designation, while the northernmost downstream portion classified as *Recreational* was excluded from the segment in order to circumvent mining operations. The segment was shortened to begin at the UFO boundary and terminate at the private land boundary south of Bedrock, and the corridor was redelineated to extend from rim to rim or one-quarter mile from the high water mark (whichever measure is less). The suitability finding complements the Wilderness Study Area designation and is consistent with WSR findings for portions of the Dolores River outside of the UFO.

Public Input

The segment received balanced support for and opposition to suitability, with supporters highlighting the segment's significance in relation to both upstream and downstream portions of the Dolores, and opponents citing potential future access and development issues associated with designation.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES

The following ORV descriptions are derived from page D-16 of the *San Juan Public Lands Draft Land Management Plan, Appendix D*.

Recreation and Scenery

This section of the Dolores contains Class II, III, and IV rapids and is listed as one of the most popular and beautiful rafting areas in Southwest Colorado. The river flows through a wild and deep canyon that combines red sandstone cliffs with coniferous forests.

Based on observations of actual use and interviews with regional recreation providers, the segment is regionally important for boating recreation, and is listed in the *Nationwide Whitewater Inventory, American Whitewater, 2006* (although it is more of a scenic float trip than a whitewater experience).

Fish and Wildlife

This section of the Dolores contains occupied habitat for roundtail chub (*Gila robusta*), considered a sensitive species by the BLM and State of Colorado.

The segment also contains a population of canyon treefrog (*Hyla arenicolor*), considered rare or imperiled within the state and listed by the state as a species of special concern. Canyon treefrogs occur along streams in deep rocky canyons and breed in canyon bottom pools, often bounded by solid rock. Although most active at night, they can be found resting in small depressions in solid rock near pools of water during the day.

Geology

Dramatic Cretaceous sandstone cliffs throughout the canyon, and in some areas the geology has confined the canyon to a uniquely persistent linear and angular form. The northerly flow of this river is rare within the region of comparison, and documents the uplift of the Colorado Plateau and the subsidence of the adjacent Paradox Basin. These two geological events also determine the unusual gradient of the river. The penetration of the river through the hard caprock of the present-day cliffs and the linear flow pattern of the canyon demonstrate the unusual rapidity of tectonic processes in the area and the speed of the corresponding downward cutting of the river, which in turn documents the geologic-timescale history of water supply in Southwest Colorado.

Ecology

The segment contains New Mexico privet (*Forestiera pubescens*), which is currently ranked as extremely rare or imperiled globally, and the BLM-sensitive Eastwood's monkeyflower (*Mimulus eastwoodiae*), ranked S1 (critically imperiled within Colorado).

Archaeology

Several rare and exemplary prehistoric archaeological sites are preserved immediately adjacent to the Dolores River between McPhee Reservoir and the small town of Bedrock. The sites range from Anasazi pueblos such as Mountain Sheep Point Village and the Kayenta House cliff dwelling to sacred sites such as the rock art panel at the mouth of Bull Canyon. These archaeological sites evince at least 11,000 years of inextricable connection between the Dolores River and the area's human inhabitants.

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes greatly to the proper hydrologic function of the Lower Dolores River downstream. The CWCB holds a year-round 78 cfs instream flow water right along the entire segment, structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable extent. The instream flow would also provide some protection to sustain the ORVs.

One pump diversion within the segment is located near the lower terminus. There are no conditional water rights within the segment.

The 2004 Statewide Water Supply Initiative identifies reservoir sites on Beaver Creek and Plateau Creek with flows into McPhee Reservoir that could be operated to increase flow in the Dolores River below McPhee Reservoir. The reservoir sites are a high priority for the Southwest Basins

Roundtable of Colorado Interbasin Compact Committee. The report also identifies potential dam sites on the Dolores River in Paradox Valley and Slickrock, Colorado.

Flow through the segment is greatly diminished by the operation of McPhee Reservoir upstream. A large portion of natural water yield entering the reservoir is transferred out of the basin, primarily for agricultural use. Water rights associated with the reservoir are senior to an instream flow water right downstream.

According to the 2004 Statewide Water Supply Initiative, most future water demand will come from conservation practices and development of existing water rights, including some existing 141,000 acre-feet of conditional water rights in the basin. Many of these are senior to both the existing instream flow water right and any instream flow associated with WSR designation.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Special Designations

The segment is located within the Dolores River Canyon WSA, as well as a Special Recreation Management Area. While the WSA affords some interim protection for the ORVs, neither designation provides the authority to acquire flows necessary for sustaining the Ecology ORV.

Rights-of-Way and Withdrawals

While portions of the segment are within an area classified as having Waterpower and Reservoir Resources the Powersite, classification does not preclude WSR designation.

Energy and Mineral Resources

Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

WSA designation limits access to the segment. WSR designation would complement BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards for special status species and wildlife.

Managing the segment to sustain native warm water fish is consistent with actions in the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

As a result of the suitability finding, the stream and corridor will be managed to protect the ORVs, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs for administering and managing this segment for the Recreation, Scenery, Wildlife, Geology, Ecology, and Archeology ORVs would be similar to or slightly higher than current funding levels. The segment is within the Dolores River Canyon WSA, with access limited to a single track non-motorized, non-mechanized trail, factors that assist in protection of the ORVs.

The BLM presently incurs some costs on this area to implement the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review. However, additional visitor use resulting from VSR designation could generate the need for funding to develop staging facilities to support primitive recreation opportunities.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The segment is within the proposed Dolores River Slickrock Canyon ACEC, being considered during development of the Uncompahgre RMP.

The segment is located within the Dolores River Canyon WSA, as well as a Special Recreation Management Area. The WSA designation affords some protection for the ORVs in accordance with the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (H-8550-1).

If the stream is designated into the NWSRS, future ROW applications on BLM lands for would include terms and conditions to protect the ORVs.

**D. NOT SUITABLE SEGMENTS:
ASSESSMENT & SUITABILITY
DETERMINATION**

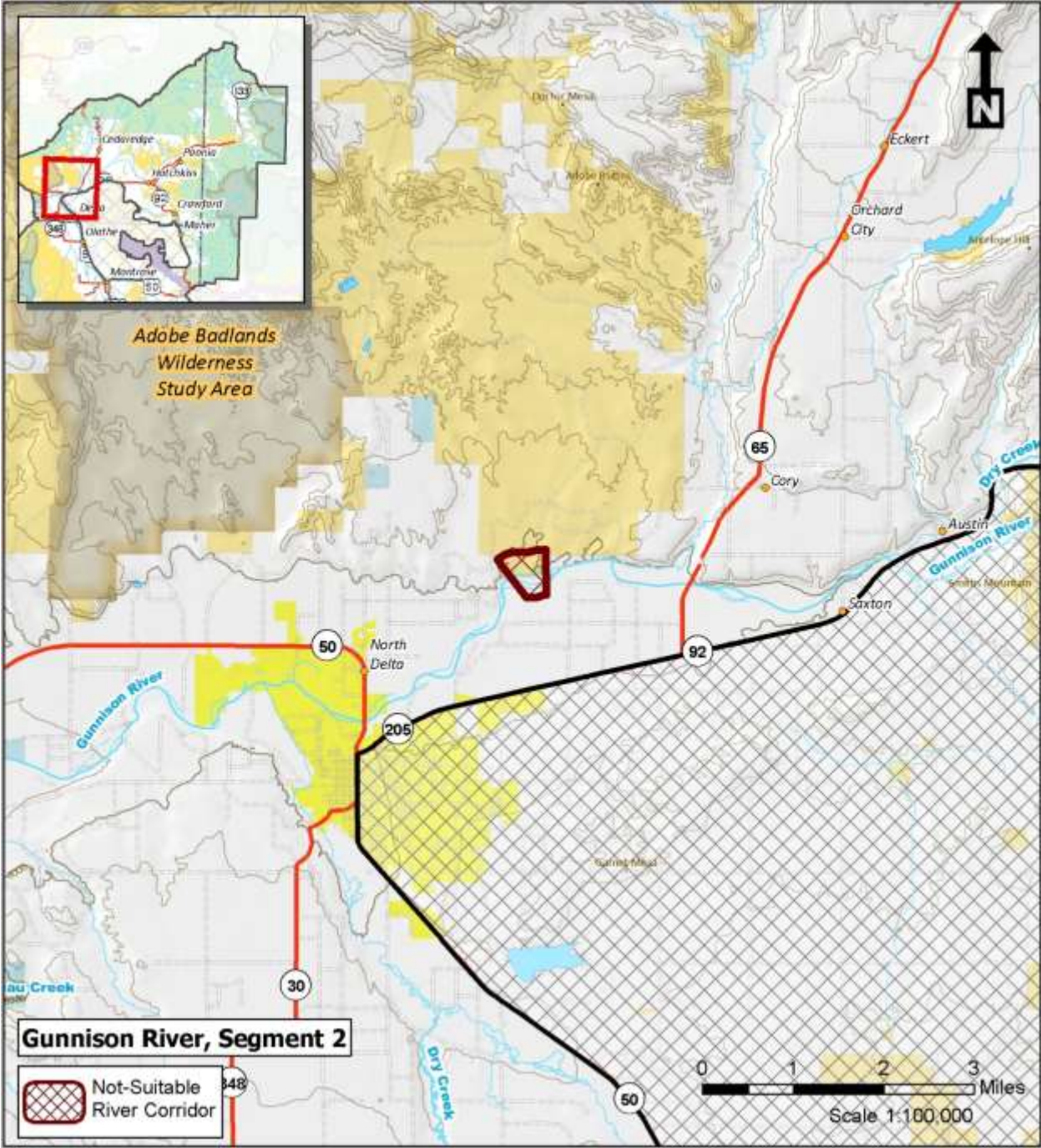


FIGURE 19 - GUNNISON RIVER, SEGMENT 2

5 ~ GUNNISON RIVER, SEGMENT 2



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Recreational

ORV: Fish

Eligible Length: 0.41 miles

BLM-Administered: 0.41 miles

Key Considerations:

- The southern bank of the river corridor is largely private land, and includes a dominant flood flow channel, which could eventually pirate the existing channel.
- Existing BLM authorities and agreements, along with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), provide effective management and river flow to protect and sustain the ORV.



**LOWER GUNNISON
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

Gunnison River, Segment 2 was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation due to the short length of the segment, as well as the lack of exemplary habitat and spawning ground for the endangered fish species for which the Fish ORV was assigned.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

No absolute or conditional water rights or impoundments occur in this segment. The segment has no instream flow water right protection. Flows derive primarily from:

- Required deliveries to downstream senior water rights.
- Upstream water releases from three in-channel reservoirs of the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Colorado River Storage Project Aspinall Unit.

An instream flow water right upstream through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area helps ensure flow through the segment. A portion of water conveyed through this segment is made as part of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (according to personal communication with Patty Gelatt of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Grand Junction, CO dated 9/20/2010).

Delta Water Works Department has an alternate point of diversion for 2.40 cfs just downstream from the lower terminus.

According to the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (2004), future water demand and development in the Gunnison Basin and within the Lower Colorado River Basin has the potential to affect the flow regime of the Gunnison River. Additionally, the initiative identified several future potential dam sites upstream of the segment which could influence the river's flow regime (including Union Park, Gateview, Gates, Almont, and Lamm reservoirs).

The south bank of the river is largely private land and includes a dominant flood flow channel, which in the future could pirate the existing channel.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Delta County zoning for private lands in the corridor does not ensure land uses compatible with designation. Delta County has no land use zoning to ensure development compatible with designation on private portions of the river corridor (according to personal communication with David Rice, Delta County Planner, 9/29/2010). However, change of use approval is needed by the county to convert existing agricultural lands to commercial or industrial development.

Special Designations

The proposed segment is within the North Delta OHV area.

Rights-of-Way (ROWs)

ROWs include a Delta County road. All future private water right and ROW applications should include BLM terms and conditions to protect the Fish ORV.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are no existing oil and gas leases or mining claims within the segment.

ADMINISTRATION

Both the instream flow water right through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area and releases from the Aspinall Unit in support of the Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program provide flows to sustain native fish populations.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

The costs for administering and managing this segment for the fish ORV would not increase much above current funding levels. Federal protections exist for the target fish species under the Endangered Species Act which would continue with or without designation. Private land acquisition would not be needed since the entire fish habitat (river channel) is under federal management. There would be no additional facilities needed to provide protection for the ORV. A small amount of additional funding would be needed for signage, public education, ranger patrolling, and maintenance.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

Potential management mechanisms considered by the BLM include:

Intensive travel management.

Designation as a Special Recreation Management Area.

Tributary watershed management activities to reduce sediment, salinity, and selenium loading to the Gunnison River.

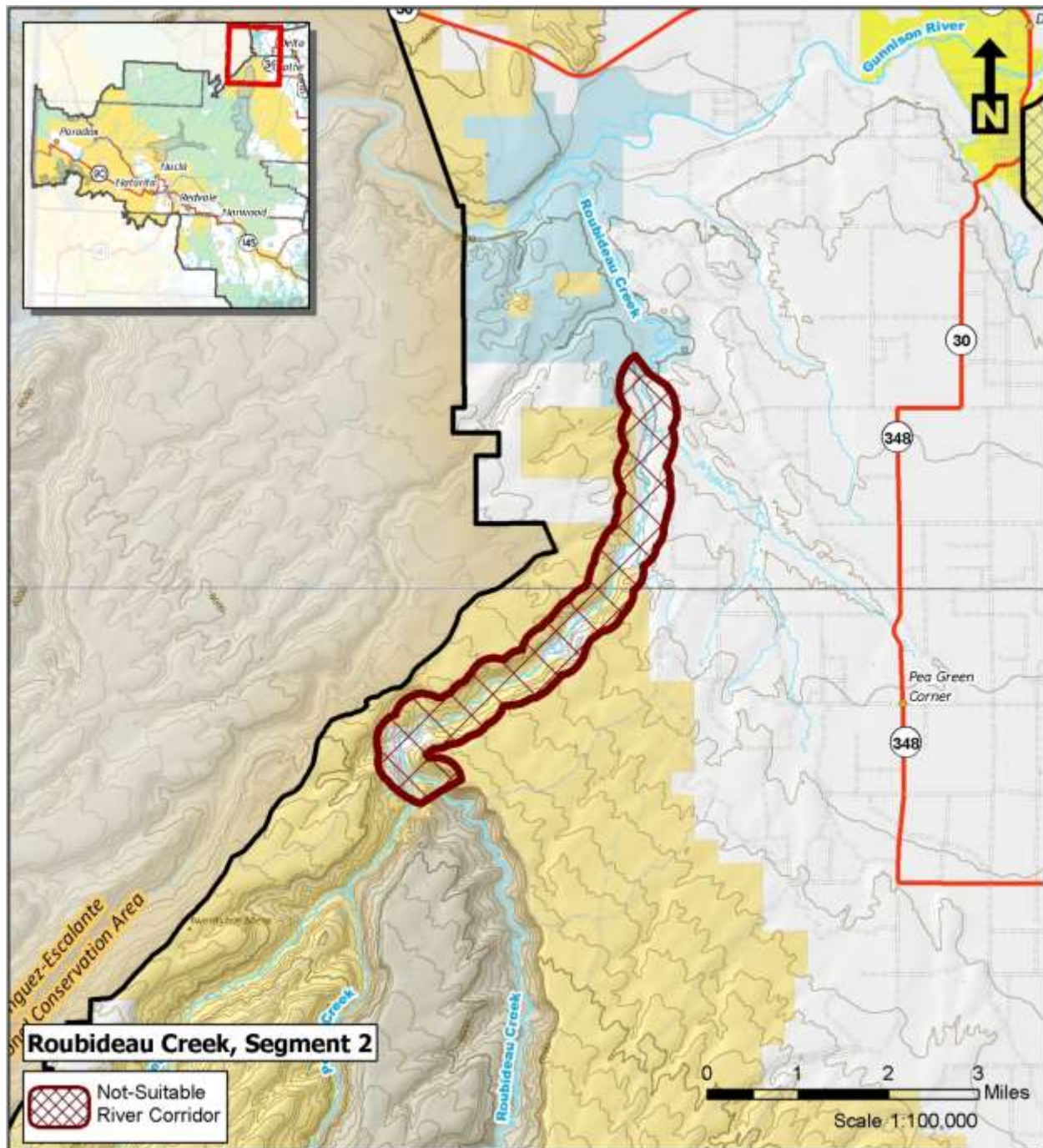


FIGURE 20 - (I I) ROUBIDEAU CREEK, SEGMENT 2

Roubideau Creek, Segment 2 was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation. Following a review by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program that lowered the rarity ranking of the Fremont cottonwood/skunkbush sumac plant community to G3, the segment no longer possesses a Vegetation ORV and the remaining Wildlife ORV could not be adequately substantiated. In addition, the BLM manages less than 50% of the land within the corridor.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

There are no absolute or conditional water rights or impoundments within this segment. The CWCB holds an instream flow water right structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable extent. The water right is decreed for 1.8 cfs (from March 1 to March 31), 4 cfs (from April 1 to June 15), 1.8 cfs (from June 16 to July 31), and 1.4 cfs (from August 1 to February 28). The instream flow provides some protection to sustain the ORVs. A streamflow regime that mimics natural seasonal flow changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community in this segment might only be achieved through federal designation.

In the headwaters, a water diversion known as Spruce Spring Ditch decreed for up to 9.3 cfs transfers water from Roubideau Creek to the Dry Creek drainage (typically limited to the snowmelt period). The diversion diminishes spring and early summer flow through the segment.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Approximately 19.4% of the corridor consists of private lands zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the General Agriculture Zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. Many of the uses are not related to agriculture and have the potential to conflict with the intent of the WSR Act.

11 ~ ROUBIDEAU CREEK, SEGMENT 2



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Scenic

ORVs: Wildlife, Vegetation
(not supported following review)

Eligible Length: 7.6 miles

BLM-Administered: 3.5 miles

Key Considerations:

- Private land is consolidated into two parcels at the upper terminus and approximately one half mile upstream of the lower terminus.
- A stream flow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community might only be achieved through WSR designation.



LOWER GUNNISON HYDROLOGIC UNIT

ROWs

ROWs crossing the segment include a county road, Tri-State transmission lines, and a Transco gas pipeline.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are no existing oil and gas leases or mining claims within the segment.

ADMINISTRATION

Reducing the segment length to omit private land would reduce potential manageability issues.

WSR designation would complement BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards for riparian and wildlife.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The segment is within two potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern being considered during development of the Uncompahgre RMP.

The current state-based instream flow water right provides some support for general vegetation and wildlife values.

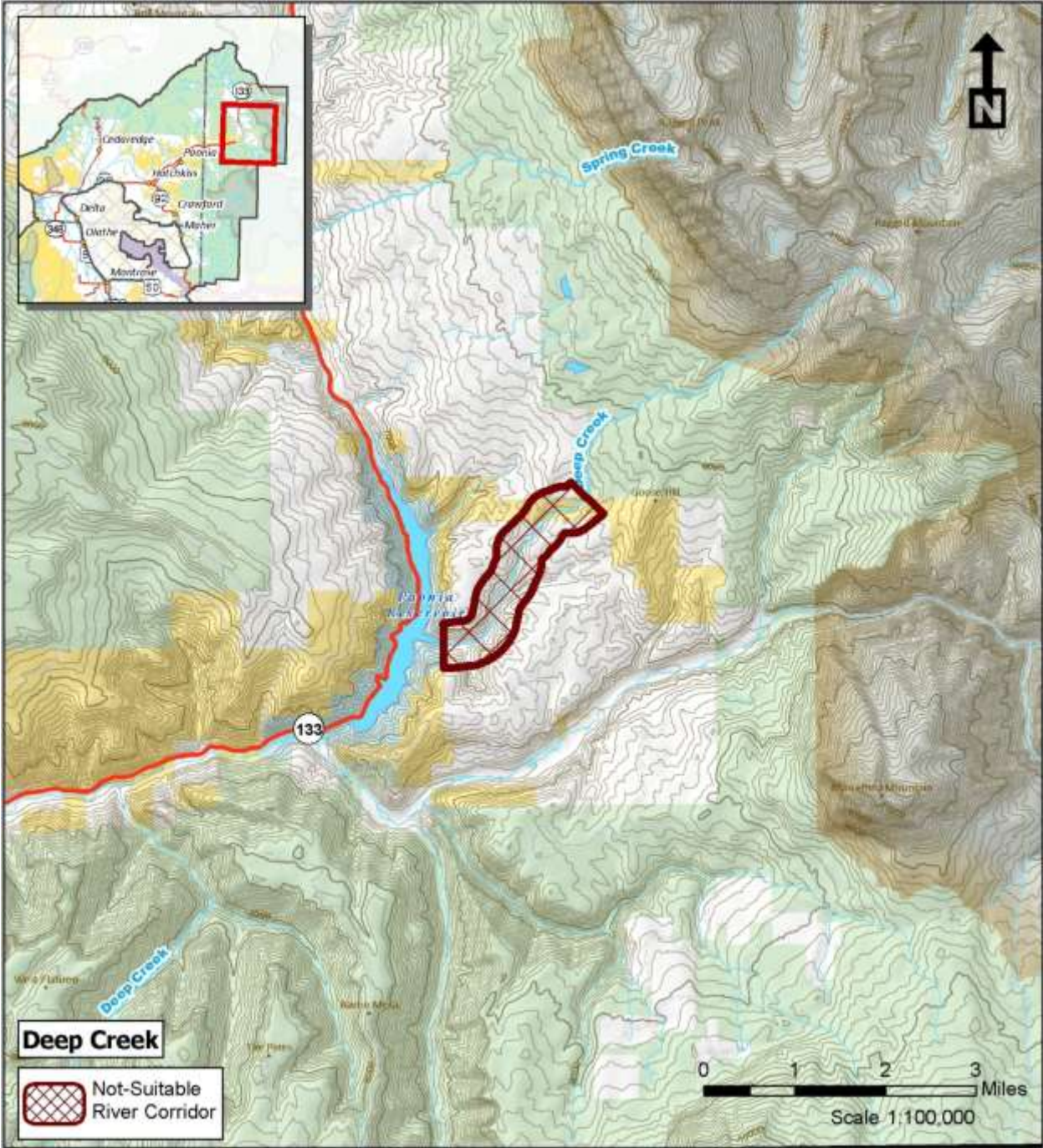


FIGURE 21 - (12) DEEP CREEK

12 ~ DEEP CREEK



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Scenic

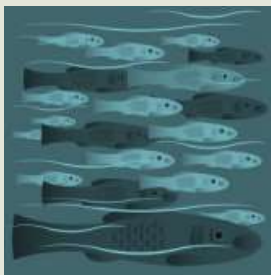
ORV: Fish

Eligible Length: 2.6 miles

BLM-Administered: 0.6 miles

Key Considerations:

- Senior upstream water diversions greatly deplete the stream flow.
- The Fish ORV could be protected through a state instream flow water right.
- Approximately 0.58 mile of the stream channel is managed by the BLM, while the remaining 1.97 miles are private.



**NORTH FORK OF THE
GUNNISON
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

Deep Creek was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation due to the short portion of the segment managed by the BLM, as well as the intermittent flow of the creek.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

There are no absolute or conditional water rights or impoundments within the segment. Four diversions above the upper terminus are used for irrigation, livestock, and domestic purposes. The diversions greatly deplete the streamflow, especially during irrigation season. Much of the natural flow, as well as water from an adjoining drainage, is used for irrigation upstream of the upper terminus, greatly diminishing flow through the segment.

The Fish ORV could be protected without WSR designation through a state instream flow water right. This segment currently has no water right protection.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Approximately 84% of the corridor is private land within Gunnison County. While there is no land use zoning, the county does have an administrative review and approval process for land use changes. While proposed residential and agricultural related facilities typically do not require a permit, more substantive changes require a permit as well as administrative review. Gunnison County *Standards for Approval of Administrative Review Projects* states that: The proposed land use change shall be compatible with, or an enhancement of, the character of existing land uses in the area, and shall not adversely impact the future development of the surrounding area.

ROWS

BLM ROW authorizations crossing or briefly running adjacent to the creek include telephone and distribution power lines, private access roads, and an historic ditch.

Energy and Mineral Resources

Lands within the segment have known high potential for oil, gas, and coal development. There are no existing oil and gas leases or mining claims.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would have limited potential to adequately protect the segment, as any federal water right associated with designation would be junior to existing water rights. While a state instream flow water right would protect the Fish ORV, it could require the purchase, lease, or donation of water to achieve adequate flow rates.

Any new water right application on public lands within the segment should contain BLM conditions to ensure compliance with the intent of the WSR Act and Endangered Species Act.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

If not designated, the BLM recommends that protective language be included in the Uncompahgre RMP to ensure that no additional impacts to streamflow quantity and quality occur on public lands within the segment.

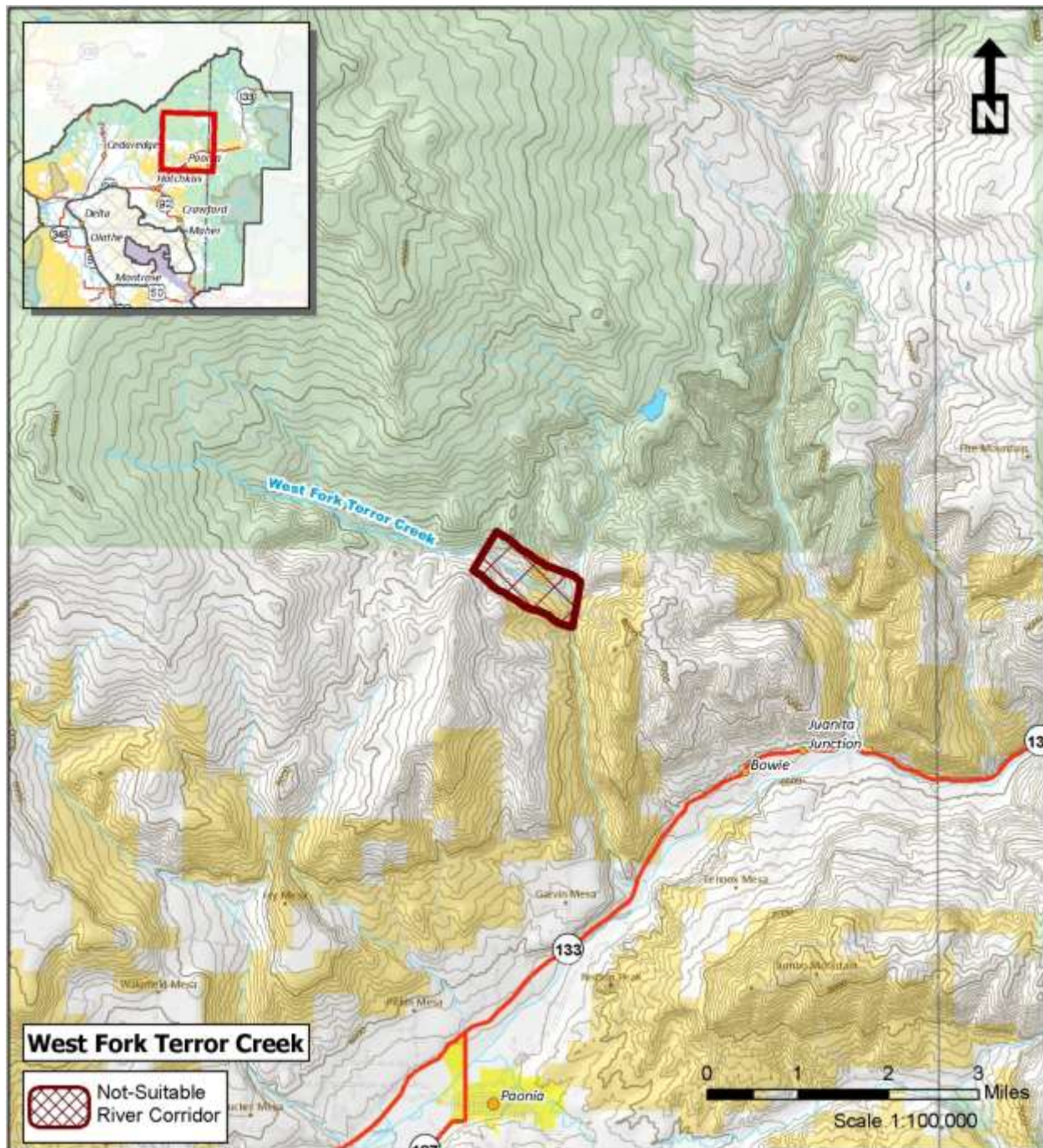


FIGURE 22 - (13) WEST FORK TERROR CREEK

West Fork Terror Creek was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation due to the predominance of private land within the segment and uncertainty regarding whether the threatened Greenback Cutthroat Trout occurs within the segment.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

There are no absolute or conditional water rights or impoundments within the segment. The Overland Ditch upstream of the segment diverts 75 cfs for irrigation, and three diversions downstream of the lower terminus create water demand through the segment during the irrigation season.

There is no instream flow water right protection on the segment. There is a conditional water right upstream of the upper terminus for 50 cfs, which could greatly deplete flow during the irrigation season if perfected. This water right has a low probability of being developed (based upon personal communication with Colorado Division of Water Resources, Division 4 Water Commissioner Stephen Tuck).

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Over 52% of the corridor consists of private land in Delta County. While Delta County has no land use zoning to ensure development compatible with WSR designation on private portions of the corridor, change of use approval by the county is necessary for converting existing agricultural lands to commercial or industrial development (based upon personal communication with Delta County Planner David Rice on September 29, 2010).

ROWS

BLM ROW authorizations crossing or briefly running adjacent to the segment include a WAPA transmission powerline, coal development access roads, and a stream gauge site to monitor coal development and water quality. There is a pending access road ROW application for the Bowie Spruce Stomp Coal Exploration License and current coal mining activities.

13 ~ WEST FORK TERROR CREEK



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Scenic

ORV: Fish

Eligible Length: 1.2 miles

BLM-Administered: 0.5 miles

Key Considerations:

- The Fish ORV could be protected through a state instream flow water right.
- The segment is within an area with high potential for coal development.
- Because the public land portion of the segment is comprised of two short reaches, one of which is bracketed by private lands, the land configuration could be difficult to manage.
- There is significant public opposition to WSR designation of this segment.

**NORTH FORK OF
THE GUNNISON
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

Energy and Mineral Leasing

Federal coal leases currently held by Bowie Resources, LLC span or are adjacent to Terror Creek. A federal coal lease spans about one mile of the upper portion and another is within one quarter mile along the west side of the segment. In a final environmental assessment, a proposed coal exploration drill pad within the corridor would not be visible from the creek and would have no detectable effect on the Fish ORV.

ADMINISTRATION

Land distribution alternates between private and public at three locations along the segment length. Providing and managing for special protection of the greenback cutthroat trout population in the West Fork of Terror Creek complies with the Endangered Species Act and BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The Fish ORV could be protected through a state instream flow water right. If the segment is not designated, the BLM recommends that protective language be included in the Uncompahgre RMP to ensure that no additional impacts to streamflow quantity and quality occur within public portions of the segment.

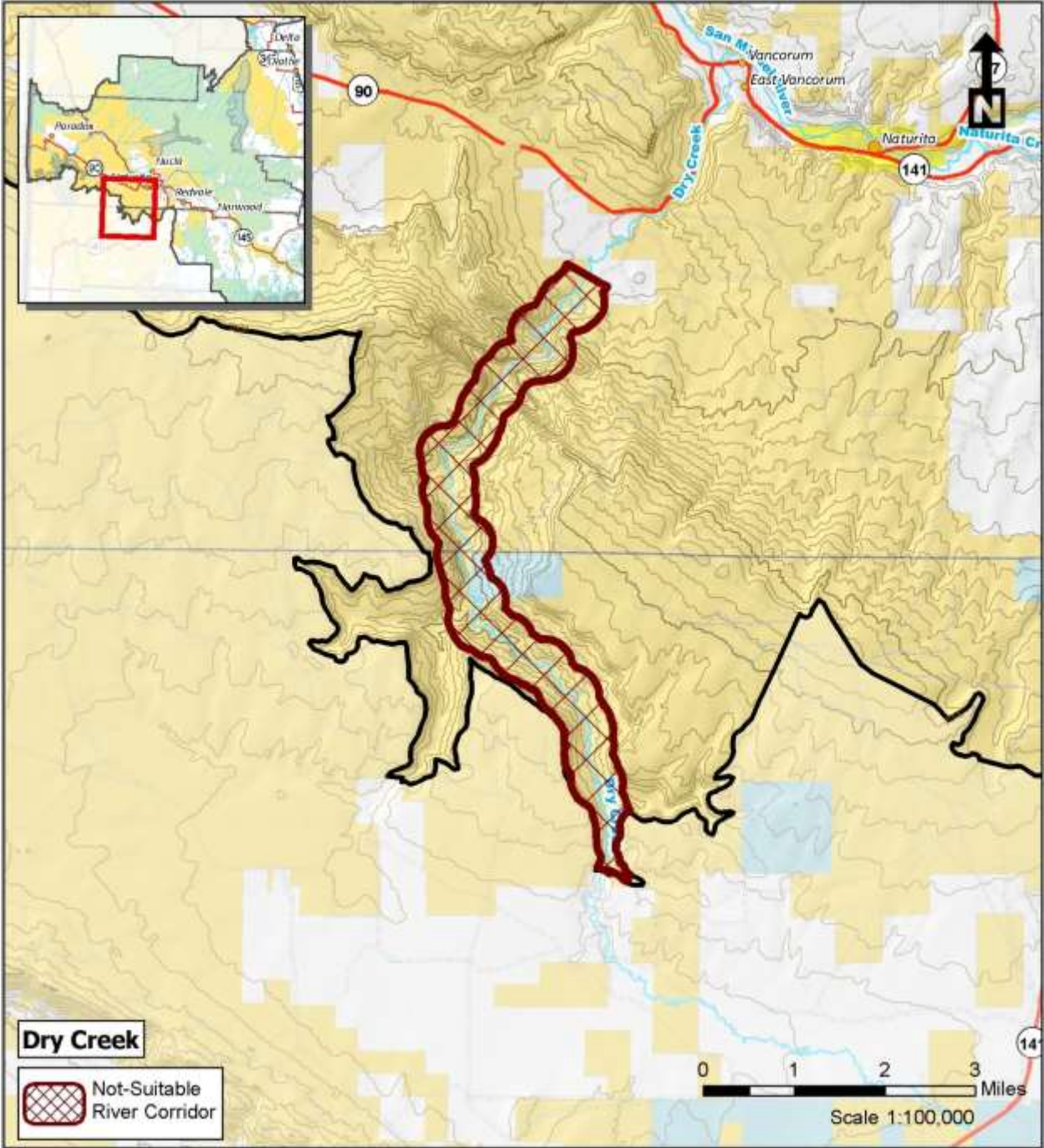


FIGURE 23 - (15) DRY CREEK

15 ~ DRY CREEK



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Wild

ORVs: Scenic, Geologic

Eligible Length: 10.5 miles

BLM-Administered: 10.4 miles

Key Considerations:

- Private land and water rights could make the segment difficult to manage.



**SAN MIGUEL
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

Dry Creek was found to be *not suitable* for VSR designation primarily due to a variety of protective factors (including low visitation and natural terrain) that serve to protect the canyon to some extent. In addition, current travel management implementation, as well as ACEC designation and No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations (potential management strategies being considered during RMP development) would provide considerable protection for the segment.

While oil and gas development is thought to be the greatest potential threat to the Dry Creek corridor, little exploration has occurred to date. Five miles of private land at the upper end of the segment and three miles of private land between the segment and the San Miguel River, as well as accompanying senior private water rights, could make VSR management difficult.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

There is no instream flow water right protection for the segment. An absolute water right diversion of 5 cfs for irrigation near the lower terminus has seniority over any future instream flow water right associated with designation. Upstream of the segment, absolute water rights include ditch diversions totaling 97 cfs and reservoir storage totaling 170 acre-feet. These rights are also senior to any instream flow associated with VSR designation.

In addition, conditional water rights upstream of the segment include ditch diversions totaling 135 cfs and reservoir storage totaling 136,400 acre-feet. If developed, these water rights would be senior to any instream flow water right associated with VSR designation.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

ROWs and Withdrawals

Hecla Mining has ROWs for earthen berm water diversion structures and a tank site within the corridor.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. According to the State of Colorado Oil and Gas Commission electronic well records database, an abandoned oil and gas well remains within the corridor. Current lode mining claims have a prior existing right to lode mineral deposits. No BLM authorizations exist for these claims.

ADMINISTRATION***Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation***

The costs for administering and managing this segment for the Scenic and Geologic ORVs would not likely increase much above current funding levels. The segment is remote, has limited trail access, and the stream corridor is nearly all (greater than 99%) federal or state managed lands, factors that assist in protection of the ORVs and support the Wild classification. It is therefore unlikely that additional facilities would be needed if the segment was designated. While just under 0.1% of the stream corridor contains private land, there is no known benefit in acquiring this land to support the ORVs.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The segment is within a potential ACEC being considered during development of the Uncompahgre RMP and an area undergoing travel management planning. Implementing travel restrictions would help to protect the area from surface-disturbing activities.

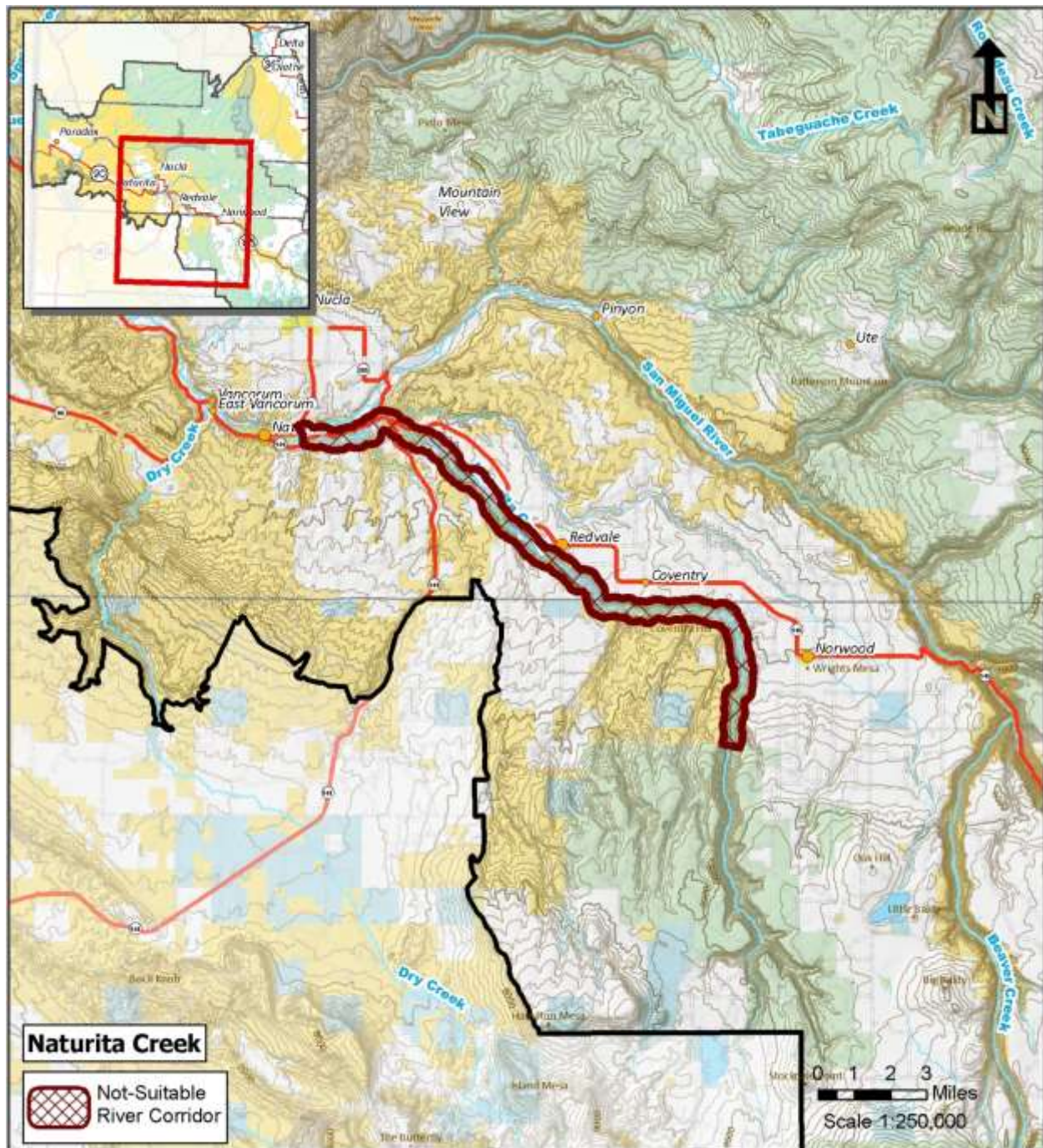


FIGURE 24 - (16) NATURITA CREEK

Naturita Creek was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation because the fish species for which the Fish ORV was assigned is found primarily within private property at the lower end of the segment and landowners in that portion do not support WSR suitability. While a private landowner with property at the upper end of the segment expressed strong support for suitability, an on-site review conducted by BLM staff concluded that a Vegetation ORV could not be substantiated in the stretch. Another landowner within the segment has a conservation easement on their property.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Naturita Creek provides value-added flow for the proper hydrologic function of the San Miguel River system and river-dependent resource values (including aquatic and riparian plant and animal species).

Five diversion ditches decreed for 2.73 cfs are scattered between the lower and upper terminus and would be senior to any instream flow water right associated with WSR designation. Absolute water right decrees upstream of the segment on the mainstem and tributaries (including Maverick Draw) consist of ditch diversions totaling 1,623 cfs and storage rights totaling 43,000 acre-feet. These water rights cause much depletion of streamflow through the segment. Changing points of diversion on existing water rights within the segment could be limited by any instream flow right associated with WSR designation.

Development of conditional water rights would be senior to any instream flow water right established as part of WSR designation and would further diminish flow through the segment. Conditional water rights on the mainstem and tributaries upstream of the segment include ditch diversions totaling 8.4 cfs and storage rights totaling 19,434 acre-feet.

The CWCB holds an instream flow water right decreed for 3 cfs year-round from above the upper terminus (at the Uncompahgre National Forest boundary) to a county road crossing just upstream of the confluence with McKee

16 ~ NATURITA CREEK



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Scenic

ORV: Fish

Eligible Length: 25 miles

BLM-Administered: 10 miles

Key Considerations:

- Numerous conditional water rights in the Naturita Creek drainage are senior to any federal water right associated with WSR designation.
- The Fish ORV is concentrated in the lower reaches of the segment.
- During suitability analysis, BLM staff determined that CWCB appropriation of a state instream flow water right would provide much protection for the Fish ORV.
- A substantial amount of private land is distributed in a diffuse pattern throughout the corridor.

**SAN MIGUEL
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

Draw (4.81 miles) structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable extent, including the Fish ORV. Due to the many surface water diversions in the creek, this instream flow progressively loses value downstream of the confluence with McKee Draw.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Almost 50% of the corridor consists of private land encompassing parts of San Miguel and Montrose counties. Portions of the corridor within Montrose County are zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. Many of the uses are not related to agriculture and have the potential to conflict with the intent of the WSR Act.

Portions of the corridor within San Miguel County and to the east and north of Naturita Creek are within the Wright's Mesa Zone District. The district is intended to preserve the rural and agricultural character of Wright's Mesa, while encouraging diverse economic opportunities compatible with the rural landscape. A history of co-existing agriculture, ranching, residential, and small business uses comprise the rural character of the area. The district discourages the sprawl pattern typically created by 35-acre lots by offering alternatives and incentives to cluster buildings, retain open lands, and keep large parcels intact.

Portions of the corridor within San Miguel County and to the south and west of Naturita Creek are within the West End Zoning District. The district is intended to preserve large, relatively remote areas of western San Miguel County for resource, agricultural, open space, and recreational purposes, while protecting private property rights. These areas currently have minimal public facilities and services and are considered premature for substantial development. Development in these areas preserves historical, archeological, and natural resources and landmarks, while allowing individuals to farm, ranch, and use necessary resources with limited intrusion on property rights.

ROWs

Numerous ROWs exist within the corridor, including Highways 145 and 141, county roads, powerlines, telephone lines, a water pipeline, and an access road to private property.

Energy and Mineral Resources

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. While portions of the segment are within an area identified by the USGS as having coal potential, the classification does not preclude WSR designation. There are no mining claims within the corridor.

ADMINISTRATION

The diffuse and scattered pattern of private land within the corridor could make this segment difficult to administer. Given the current level of water depletion in Naturita Creek, sufficient flow needed to protect the fish population might need to be acquired from existing decree owners. WSR designation would be consistent with the BLM Colorado Public Land Health standard for special status species.

Proposed management actions include designating the area as a Special Recreation Management Area, as well as conducting travel management planning for Burn Canyon (part of the Norwood Recreation District in Montrose and San Miguel counties).

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

The costs for administering and managing this segment for the Fish ORV would be substantially higher than current funding levels. Approximately half (3,177 acres) of the stream corridor is composed of private land with a fragmented pattern throughout most of the reach that could restrict access and limit available management options within the stream corridor. Land acquisition from willing sellers would be necessary in order to effectively and proactively manage for the ORV. Some stream channel modification projects might be needed to facilitate fish propagation.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

Apart from WSR designation, options for protecting the Fish ORV include actions implemented in accordance with the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

BLM staff determined that appropriation of an instream flow water right below McKee Draw by the CWCB would provide much protection for the Fish ORV.

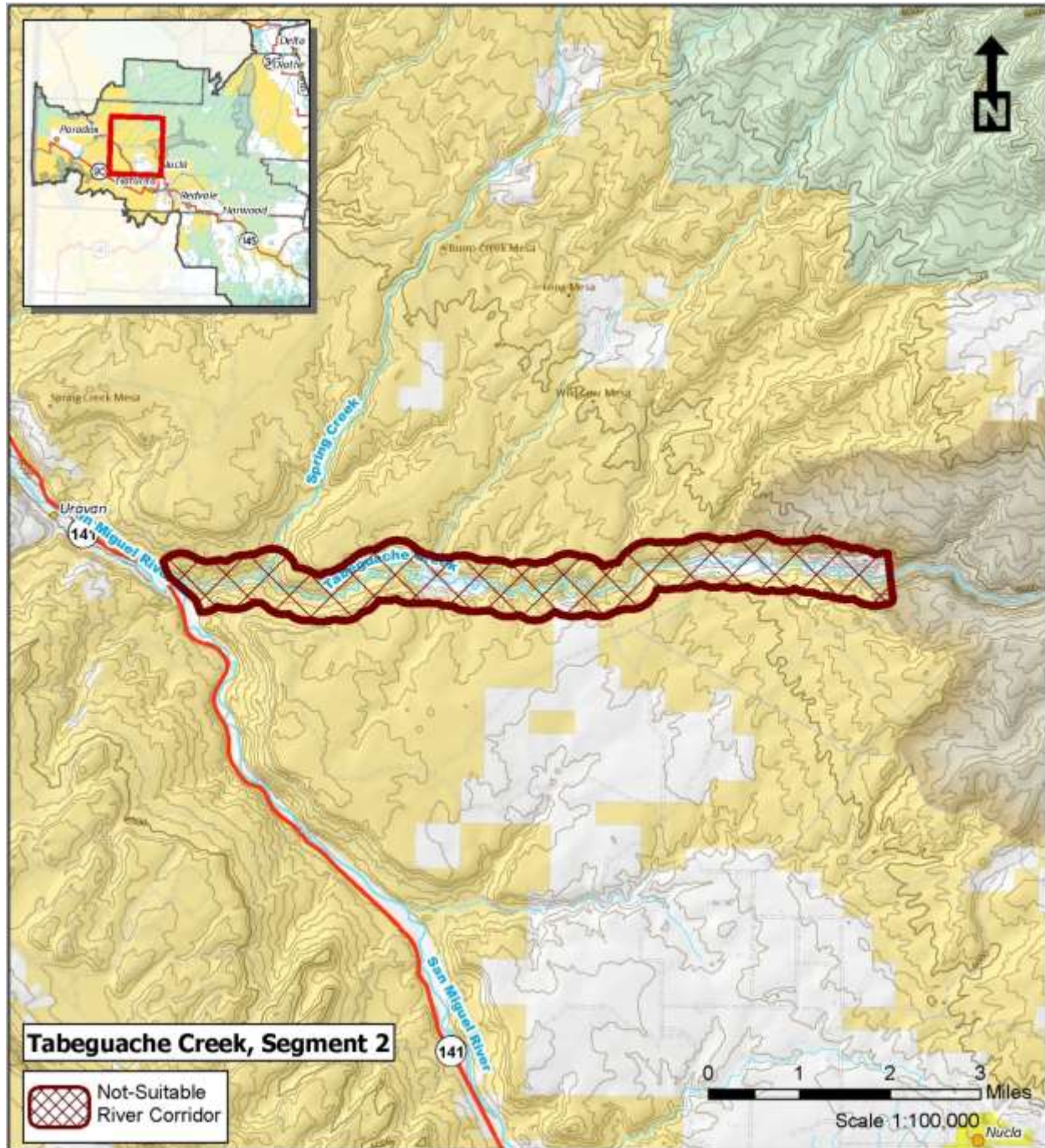


FIGURE 25 - (24) TABEGUACHE CREEK, SEGMENT 2

Tabeguache Creek, Segment 2 was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation based on a consensus that much private land would make the segment difficult to manage. In addition, there was a lack of support from private landowners for finding the segment suitable.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of the Lower San Miguel River downstream. One small impoundment occurs within the segment. An instream flow water right appropriation has been finalized for this segment.

While the water right provides additional protection to sustain the Vegetation ORV, the Templeton Ditch can dewater the channel downstream of the diversion during the summer months. The ditch is decreed for 5.5 cfs and is senior to the instream flow water right.

Although it has not been in use for several years, the Uravan pipeline diversion and ROW located near the lower terminus of the segment remains an active water right. Several small stock reservoirs and ditch diversions on tributaries draining into the segment are decreed for a total of 62.3 cfs and 46 acre-feet of storage rights. Changing points of diversion on existing water rights within the segment could be restricted by any instream flow right associated with WSR designation.

If developed, a conditional water right ditch diversion of 3.5 cfs upstream of the segment could result in additional diminution of flow through the segment. Conditional water rights are senior to a pending state instream flow and any future instream flow associated with WSR designation.

The majority of the source water area upstream of this segment is managed by the BLM or USFS. Existing authorities allow for management actions to ensure adequate river flow needed to sustain the ORV.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

24 ~ TABEGUACHE CREEK, SEGMENT 2



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Recreational

ORVs: Cultural, Vegetation

Eligible Length: 11.6 miles

BLM-Administered: 7.9 miles

Key Considerations:

- Congressional designation to protect wilderness values upstream ensures reliable flow through the segment, while a recently authorized state-based instream flow will help sustain the Vegetation ORV.
- The upper Tabeguache Basin has experienced limited water development and has few conditional water rights, resulting in a flow regime that mimics natural conditions, except during irrigation.
- The source water area upstream is managed primarily by the BLM and USFS, facilitating protect flow and sustain the ORV.
- Private property within the corridor consists of three distinct parcels separated by public land.

SAN MIGUEL HYDROLOGIC UNIT

Private property within the corridor consists of three distinct parcels separated by public land. The scattered land configuration provides opportunities for land uses that could negatively impact public land within the corridor. Approximately 17.2% of the corridor consists of private land zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. Many of the allowable and special uses are not related to agriculture and have the potential to conflict with the intent of the WSR Act.

Special Designations

Cultural resources within the segment are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Rights-of-Way and Withdrawals

ROWs within the corridor include county roads V19 & U19, telephone and power lines adjacent to and crossing the creek, and an historic ditch adjacent to the creek in the upper part of the segment. Umetco owns a water pipeline and road adjacent to and crossing the creek.

While portions of the segment are within an area classified as having Waterpower and Reservoir Resources the Powersite Classification does not preclude WSR designations.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would complement the BLM Colorado Public Land Health standard for riparian vegetation.

Management actions in support of the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*) promote preserving the streamflow in Tabeguache Creek, which in turn benefits the Vegetation ORV.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

Costs for administering and managing this segment for the Cultural and Vegetation ORVs would be moderately higher than current funding levels. Portions of the segment can be accessed by county roads which would facilitate increased visitor use if designated.

The corridor does include parcels of private land containing riparian vegetation. As funding and opportunities arise, the BLM would pursue land acquisition from willing sellers, which would add value for ORV management and protection.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

Congressional designation of an area upstream of the segment (that includes Tabeguache Creek, Segment I and a contiguous USFS segment) to protect its wilderness values ensures reliable flow through the segment, while a recently finalized state-based instream flow water right would contribute additional flow to help sustain the Vegetation ORV. Future water right

applications on public land within the segment should contain BLM terms and conditions ensuring that the ORVs are sustained.

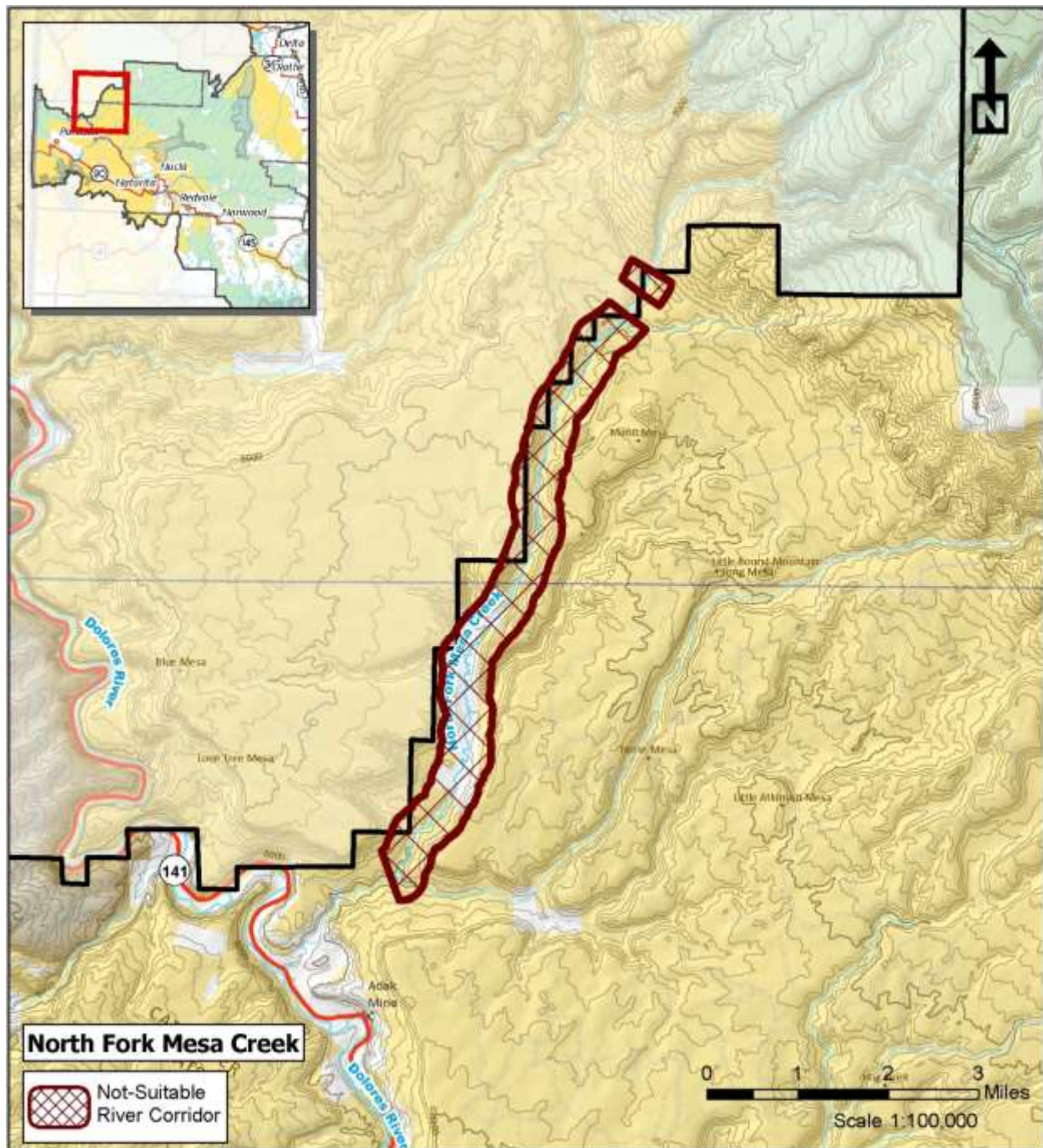


FIGURE 26 - (26) NORTH FORK MESA CREEK

Following a review by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program that lowered the rarity ranking of the Narrowleaf cottonwood/strawleaf willow/silver buffaloberry plant community to G3, the segment no longer possesses a Vegetation ORV to support WSR eligibility.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

The North Fork of Mesa Creek contributes flow to Mesa Creek and the Lower Dolores River, providing habitat for native warm water fish. WSR designation would be consistent with actions in the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for the Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

The CWCB holds instream flow water rights along the entire segment structured to protect the natural environment to a reasonable extent. The instream flow provides some protection to sustain the Vegetation ORV. From the lower terminus and 3.90 miles upstream to Cedar Tree Ditch Diversion, seasonal instream flow is 2.1 cfs for the period from April 1 to May 31. From Cedar Tree Ditch to the upper terminus, instream flow appropriation varies throughout the year. Between April 1 and May 31, appropriated instream flow is 2.75 cfs. It drops to 0.5 cfs between June 1 and February 29, and rises to 1.9 cfs between March 1 and March 31.

There are three water diversions in the lower reach, but only the Patterson Ditch has a decreed flow (of 14.12 cfs). The Patterson ditch diversion is located on public land. This water right is senior to the existing instream flow water right and any federal water right associated with WSR designation. An instream flow right associated with WSR designation could restrict the ability to change points of diversion for existing water rights within the segment.

26 ~ NORTH FORK MESA CREEK



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Scenic

ORV: Vegetation (not supported following review)

Eligible Length: 8.5 miles

BLM-Administered: 5.8 miles

Key Considerations:

- There is little water development in the headwaters of the North Fork Mesa Creek, which produces a flow regime mimicking natural conditions.
- The majority of the source water area upstream of the segment is managed by the BLM or USFS and existing authorities provide for ample management actions to protect stream flow needed to sustain the Vegetation ORV.
- Several ROWs occur within the corridor.
- There is a significant amount of private land in the lower reach of the segment.

LOWER DOLORES HYDROLOGIC UNIT

A number of stock watering facilities in headwater tributaries constitute the only water use above the upper terminus.

There are no conditional water rights within or upstream of the segment.

Any additional water right filings or changes to existing diversions would be junior to the instream flow water right.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Approximately 17.2% of the corridor consists of private lands zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. Many of the allowable and special uses are not related to agriculture and have the potential to conflict with the intent of the WSR Act.

ROWs and Withdrawals

ROWs include telephone and power lines. A county road runs along the creek, dominating the setting for much of the segment. Unsurfaced roads cross the stream in a couple of locations.

There is a bat maternity roost withdrawal along the creek.

While portions of the segment are within an area classified as having Waterpower and Reservoir Resources, the Powersite Classification does not preclude WSR designation.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would complement the BLM Colorado Public Land Health standard for riparian vegetation, while private land at the lower portion of the corridor could create challenges for managing the area.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

Upon finding a segment suitable, the stream and corridor would be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

Because the BLM and USFS manage the headwaters of the North Fork of Mesa Creek, authorities exist to preserve a flow regime that mimics the natural variability needed to sustain the Vegetation ORV.

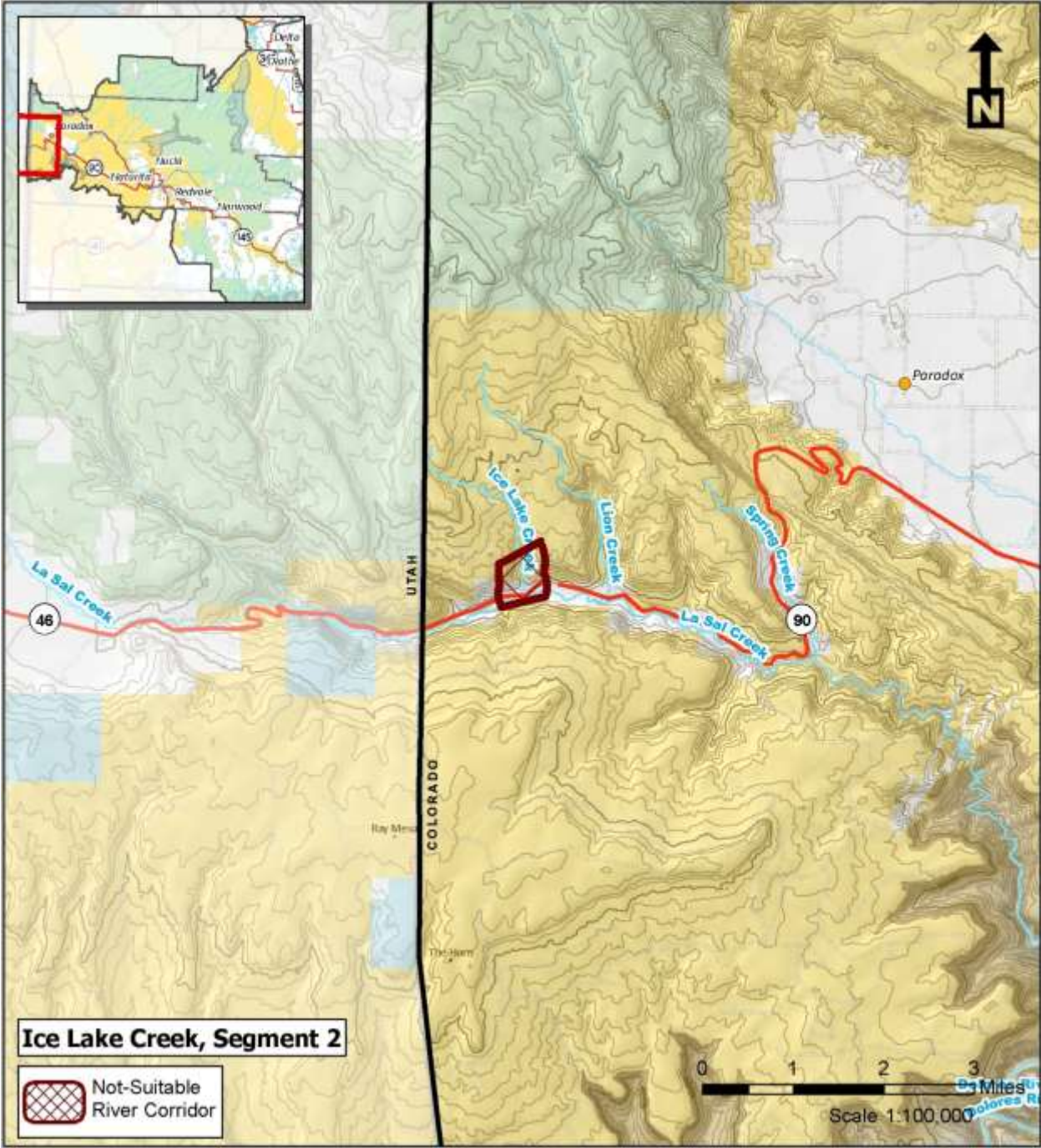


FIGURE 27 - (28) ICE LAKE CREEK, SEGMENT 2

28 ~ ICE LAKE CREEK, SEGMENT 2



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Scenic

ORV: Scenic

Eligible Length: 0.58 miles

BLM-Administered: 0.31 miles

Key Considerations:

- Landowners in the lower reach of the segment oppose WSR designation.
- The segment length is short and there are access issues involving private land within the segment.
- The BLM manages the source water areas that produce baseflow for the creek, providing protection for flow-dependent values.



**UPPER DOLORES
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

The segment was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation due to mining along the mesa at the northern end of the segment, as well as the short segment length. In addition, the segment terminates on private land, which could make the area more difficult to manage.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of La Sal Creek downstream. There is no instream flow water right protection on the segment. A federal water right associated with WSR designation could restrict changing the points of diversion for existing water rights within the segment.

One absolute water right near the lower terminus would be senior to any water right associated with WSR designation. There are no conditional water rights or impoundments within or upstream of the segment. In the lower reaches, La Sal Creek is protected by an instream flow water right that could restrict future diversions from Ice Lake Creek.

Flow through the segment could be further reduced if diversion amounts are enlarged or diversion points are changed prior to securing an instream flow water right.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Approximately 42% of the corridor consists of private lands zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. Many of the uses are not related to agriculture and have the potential to conflict with the intent of the WSR Act. The private property in question is a contiguous parcel located just upstream of the lower terminus. The potential for impacts to the ORV due to lack of zoning controls would be limited on public land.

ROWs

A BLM road traverses the canyon just east of the creek.

Energy and Mineral Resources

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

Ice Lake Creek contributes flow to La Sal Creek, providing spring spawning habitat for native warm water fish consistent with the Range-wide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta*), Bluehead Sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*), and Flannelmouth Sucker (*Catostomus latipinnis*).

A large amount of private land hinders access to public land within the segment and a number of private landowners have expressed opposition to WSR designation.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

Upon finding a segment suitable, the stream and corridor would be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Administering and managing this segment for the Scenic ORV would increase costs moderately above current levels. The public land portion of this segment is remote and has no developed access, both factors that would assist in the protection of the ORV. The lower reach of this segment is private land within which the Ice Lake Creek Corridor is bisected by Colorado State Highway 90.

Private land currently limits access to the public land portion of the corridor from the highway. Acquiring portions of private land from willing sellers would add value for managing and providing public access to this segment if designated. If designated, additional facilities would not likely be needed.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The following potential actions were identified as alternatives to WSR designation:

Upgrade the Visual Resource Management classification in order to protect scenic values.

Apply a No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulation to protect the corridor.

Include conditions in the Uncompahgre RMP to protect the baseflow source water area at the upper terminus.

The Scenic ORV could be protected through existing authorities by requiring BLM conditions on all future applications and actions to ensure compatibility with the scenic classification.

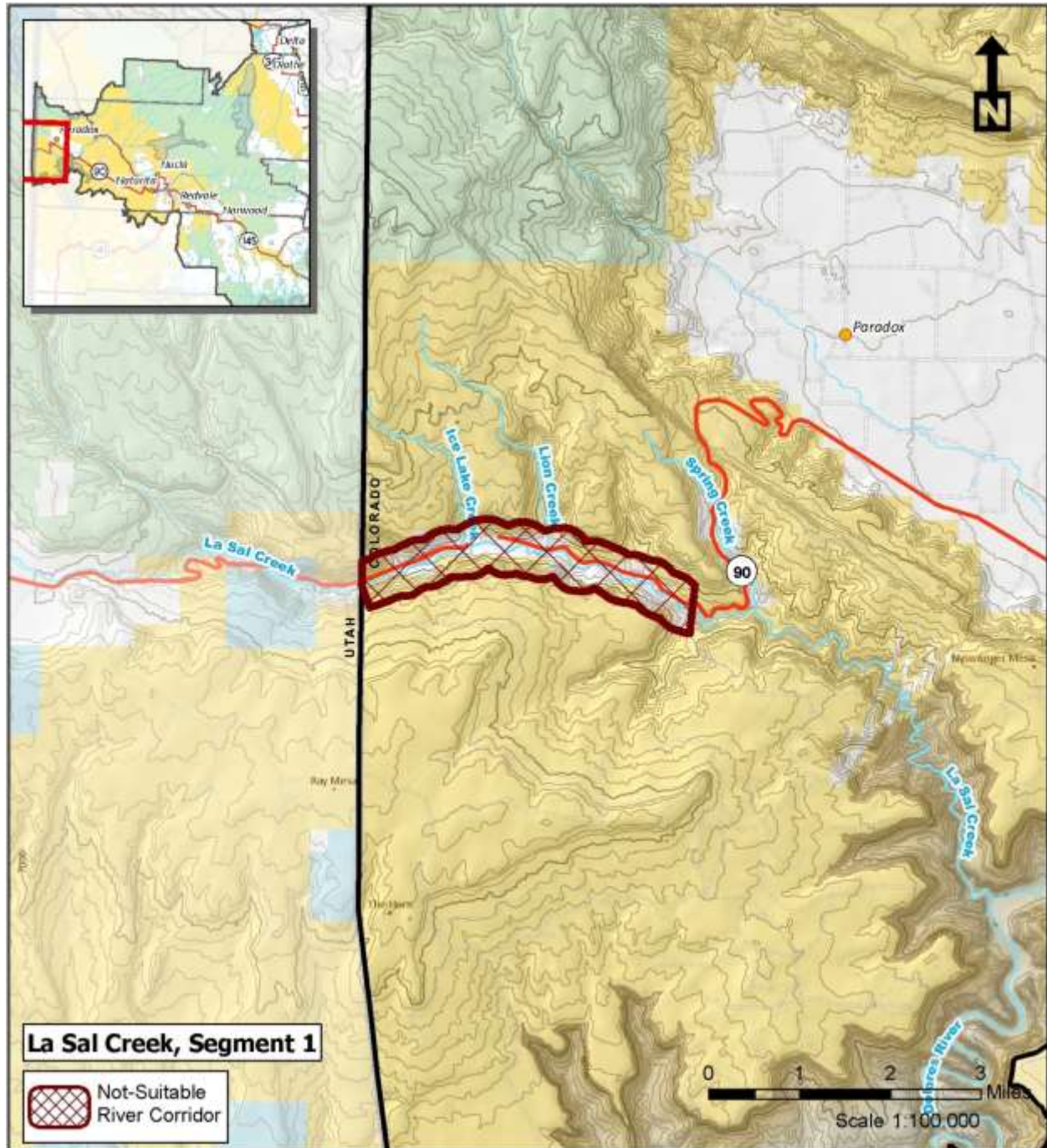


FIGURE 28 - (29) LA SAL CREEK, SEGMENT I

The segment was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation due to extensive private land that could make the segment difficult to manage. In addition, a large number of private landowners do not support finding the segment suitable.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

A streamflow regime that mimics natural seasonal changes necessary for sustaining a healthy riparian vegetation community in this segment might only be achieved through WSR designation. The upstream terminus is along the Colorado-Utah state line and much of the headwaters are in Utah.

There is no instream flow water right protection on the segment. Water yield through the segment contributes greatly to the proper hydrologic function of the lower reaches of La Sal Creek, which is protected by an instream flow water right, possibly restricting additional water development within the segment.

Four absolute water right diversions totaling 8.9 cfs within private portions of the reach are senior to any instream flow water right. A water right associated with WSR designation could restrict changing the points of diversion on existing water rights within the segment.

No conditional water rights or impoundments occur within the segment.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Approximately 47% of the corridor consists of private lands zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. Many of the allowable and special uses are not related to agriculture and have the potential to conflict with the intent of the WSR Act.

29 ~ LA SAL CREEK, SEGMENT I



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Recreational

ORV: Fish, Vegetation

Eligible Length: 4.82 miles

BLM-Administered: 0.62 miles

Key Considerations:

- There is a significant amount of private land within the segment, along with significant opposition to WSR designation from private landowners.
- Land use zoning for private land within the segment is relatively non-restrictive.



**UPPER DOLORES
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

ROWs and Withdrawals

ROWs within the segment include a CDOT highway and county roads. Telephone and power lines cross and run adjacent to La Sal Creek.

Energy and Mineral Leasing

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

The headwaters of La Sal Creek are in the State of Utah. A state-based instream flow water right would provide sufficient flow to sustain the Fish ORV, but would be inadequate for sustaining the Vegetation ORV. WSR designation would complement BLM Colorado Public Land Health standards for riparian vegetation and special status species.

A large amount and configuration of private land with non-restrictive zoning occurs within the segment. Large portions of private land have been converted to agricultural crops, making it difficult to manage for native riparian vegetation.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

Upon finding a segment suitable, the stream and corridor would be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs for administering and managing this segment for the Fish and Vegetation ORVs would be substantially higher than current funding levels. Some management actions to sustain the target fish species would continue with or without designation per the Range-Wide Conservation Agreement and strategy for Roundtail Chub, Bluehead Sucker, and Flannelmouth Sucker.

Private land acquisition would not be pursued, as more than 87% of the stream segment is privately owned, making it difficult for the BLM to acquire enough land to benefit management of the ORV. Some stream channel modification projects may be needed to facilitate fish propagation.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

Any future private water right or ROW application on public land within the segment should include BLM terms and conditions to protect the ORVs.

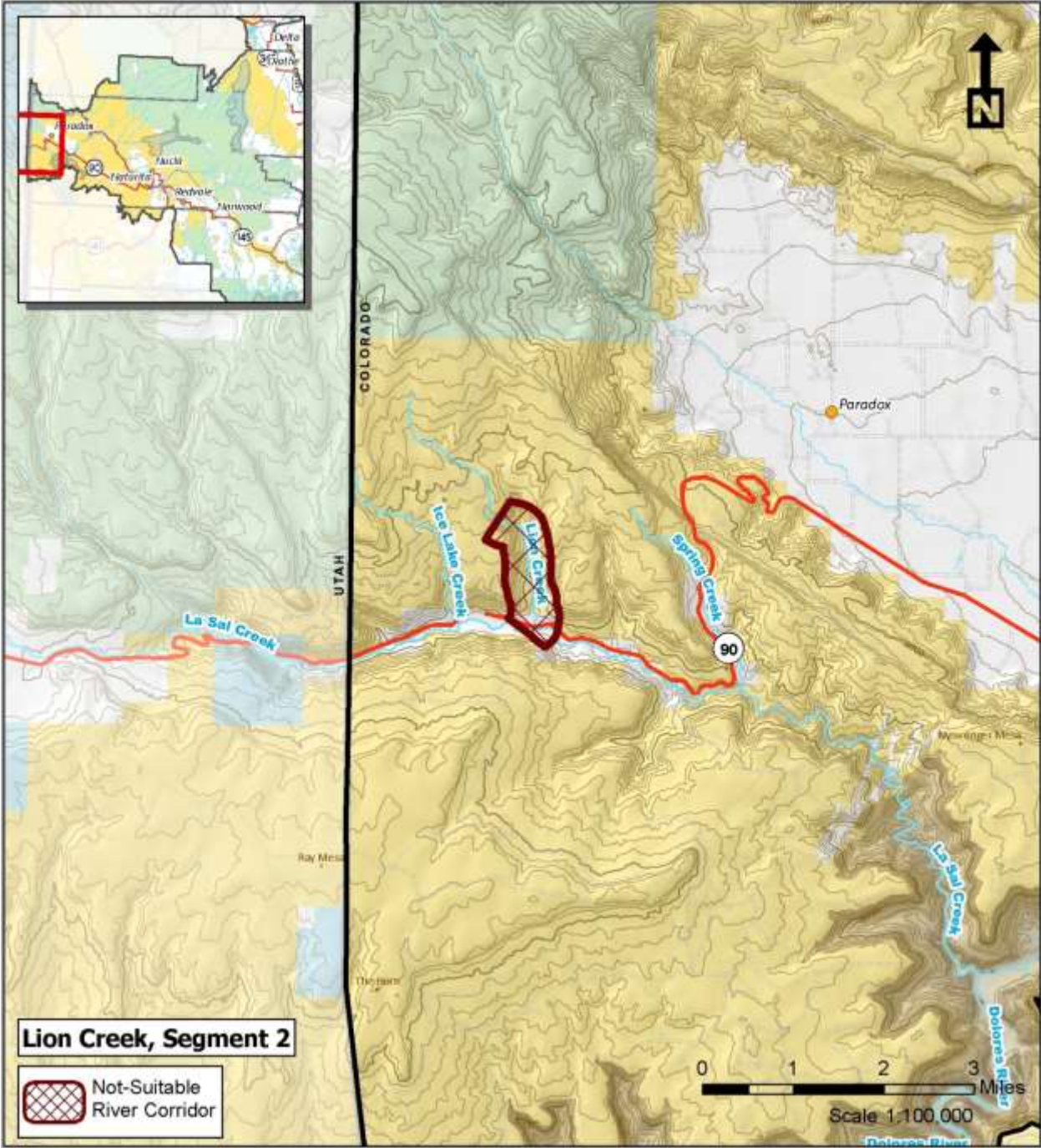


FIGURE 29 - (32) LION CREEK, SEGMENT 2

32 ~ LION CREEK, SEGMENT 2



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Scenic

ORV: Vegetation

Eligible Length: 1.57 miles

BLM-Administered: 1.26 miles

Key Considerations:

- There is a much private land and landowner opposition to WSR designation in the lower reaches of the segment.
- Because the BLM manages the source water areas that produce baseflow for the creek, flow-dependent values could be protected through existing authorities.
- Existing authorities could provide much protection for the Vegetation ORV by requiring that future BLM applications and actions be compatible with sustaining the riparian vegetation.

**UPPER DOLORES
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

Lion Creek, Segment 2 was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation due to the short length of the segment, as well as a measure of self-protection afforded by the steep slopes of the corridor. In addition, private land restricts access and landowners do not support finding the segment suitable.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Water yield through the segment contributes to the proper hydrologic function of La Sal Creek downstream, which is protected by an instream flow water right in the lower reaches that might also limit additional water development in Lion Creek. There is no instream flow water right protection for Lion Creek.

The Manning Ditch is an absolute water right (of 0.6 cfs) near the lower terminus that would be senior to any instream flow associated with WSR designation. There are no conditional water rights or impoundments within or upstream of the segment.

Changing points of diversion on existing water rights within the segment could be limited in the future by water rights associated with WSR designation. Enlarging the diversion amount or changing the diversion point of an existing water right within the segment would further reduce flow within the longer reach of the segment if the changes are decreed prior to securing water rights associated with WSR designation.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Approximately 17.4% of the corridor consists of private lands zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. The property is a contiguous parcel located just upstream of the lower terminus, limiting the potential for impacts to the ORV.

Energy and Mineral Resources

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would complement the BLM Colorado Public Land Health Standard for riparian vegetation.

There is a much private land and landowner opposition to WSR designation in the lower reaches.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

Upon finding a segment suitable, the stream and corridor would be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs for administering and managing this segment for the Vegetation ORV would increase moderately above current funding levels. The public land portion of this segment is remote and has no developed access, both factors that would assist in the protection of the ORV. The lower reach of this segment is private land within which the Lion Creek Corridor is bisected by Colorado State Highway 90.

The private land presently limits access to the public land portion of the corridor from the highway. Thus, acquiring portions of the private land from willing sellers would be value added for managing and providing public access to this segment if designated. A small amount of additional funding would be needed for signage, public education, ranger patrolling, and maintenance. Additional facilities would not be needed if designated. No detailed cost analysis or estimate was prepared as part of this study.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The Vegetation ORV could be protected through existing authorities by requiring BLM terms and conditions on all future water right and ROW applications and actions to ensure compatibility with sustaining the riparian vegetation.

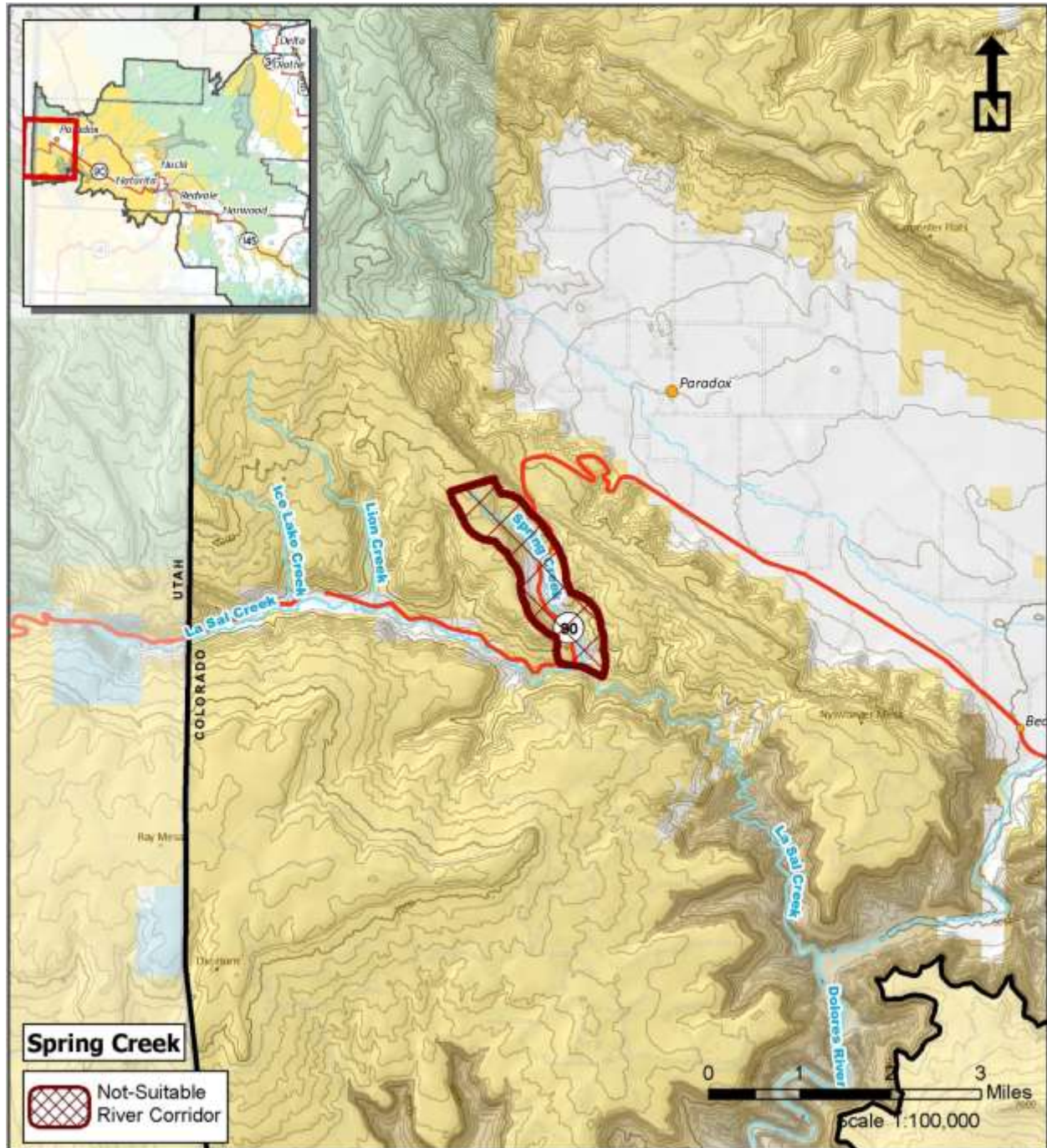


FIGURE 30 - (33) SPRING CREEK

Spring Creek was found to be *not suitable* for WSR designation due to the short length of the segment and an extensive amount of interspersed private land that could make the segment difficult to manage. In addition, the segment is afforded a measure of self-protection by the steep slopes that define the corridor.

SEGMENT ASSESSMENT

WATER RIGHTS AND USES

Although Spring Creek has no instream flow water right protection, water yield from the creek contributes flow to La Sal Creek, which is protected by an instream flow in the lower reaches that could restrict additional water development within the segment.

An absolute ditch diversion water right within the segment is senior to any water right associated with WSR designation. There are no conditional water rights or impoundments within or upstream of the segment.

Enlarging or changing diversion points on existing water rights within the segment prior to obtaining a federal reserved water right associated with WSR designation could further reduce flow within the reach. If the points of diversion are on public land, the water right could contain BLM terms and conditions limiting impacts to the Vegetation ORV.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Approximately 24.1% of the corridor consists of private lands zoned as General Agriculture in the Montrose County Master Plan. As presently defined in the Montrose County Zoning Resolution, the zone is relatively non-restrictive regarding allowable uses-by-right and uses requiring a special use permit. Many of the uses are not related to agriculture. Private parcels cover much of the middle portion and lower terminus of the segment.

ROWs

ROWs within the segment include Highway 90, a county road, a powerline, and a telephone line that parallels a portion of the creek.

33 ~ SPRING CREEK



~NOT SUITABLE~

Classification: Recreational

ORV: Vegetation

Eligible Length: 2.65 miles

BLM-Administered: 1.49 miles

Key Considerations:

- The segment is short and non-contiguous, with private land parcels near the lower terminus and along much of the middle portion.
- The BLM manages the source water areas that produce baseflow for Spring Creek, allowing for protection of flow-dependent values through existing authorities.
- The Vegetation ORV in the segment could be protected through existing authorities by ensuring that all future applications and actions contain BLM terms and conditions.

**UPPER DOLORES
HYDROLOGIC UNIT**

Energy and Mineral Resources

There are existing oil and gas leases within the segment. Active mining claims occur within the corridor and have a prior existing right to mineral deposits.

ADMINISTRATION

WSR designation would complement the BLM Colorado Public Land Health standard for riparian vegetation.

Potential Costs Associated with WSR Designation

Upon finding a segment suitable, the stream and corridor would be managed to protect the ORV, with little additional funding needed. Formal WSR designation would require additional funding for signage, public education, ranger patrols, and maintenance, the amount of which would vary depending upon projected increases in visitor use, as well as the segment's size, location, and other attributes.

Costs for administering and managing this segment for the Vegetation ORV would increase slightly above current funding levels. The headwater, public land portion of this segment is remote and has no developed access, both factors that would assist in the protection of the ORV.

The middle and lower portions of this segment contain private land within which the Spring Creek corridor is bisected by Colorado State Highway 90. The private land currently limits highway access to public land portions of the segment. Thus, acquiring portions of private land from willing sellers would add value to managing and providing public access to this segment if designated. A small amount of additional funding would be necessary for signage, public education, ranger patrolling, and maintenance. Additional facilities would not be needed if designated.

Alternative Protective Measures Considered

The Vegetation ORV would receive much protection by placing BLM terms and conditions on all future actions and activities within the segment.

E. DOLORES-SAN MIGUEL STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

SOUTHWEST RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The SWRAC is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to represent a variety of interests across the Southwest District. The SWRAC meets two to four times annually to develop recommendations for the BLM regarding the preparation, amendment, and implementation of land use plans for public lands and resources and to provide representative citizen counsel and advice to the Secretary of the Interior concerning the planning and management of public land resources within the BLM Southwest District.

Between November 2010 and January 2011, a subgroup of the SWRAC conducted a series of public meetings in various towns throughout the western portion of the planning area to inform and solicit comment regarding segments within the Dolores and San Miguel river basins. The SWRAC Subgroup presented their suitability recommendations to the full SWRAC at the Statewide RAC Meeting on February 25. The SWRAC adopted the recommendations and forwarded them to the UFO for consideration.

TABLE 7 - SUMMARY OF SWRAC SUITABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

SEGMENT/ Eligibility Report Page Number	BLM ELIGIBILITY CLASSIFICATION	SWRAC RECOMMENDATION	COMMENTS/BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION
I4 - Beaver Creek Page 57	Scenic	Suitable for Recreational classification	<p>While mining is not a significant factor within the segment, the SWRAC determined that the following issues render the segment better suited to classification as <i>Recreational</i>:</p> <p>Recreational classification would allow for a healthy balance of competing interests: protection of the ORV, while providing reasonable certainty that future water development projects would receive consideration and could move forward with minimal difficulty</p> <p>The Norwood Water Commission has requested future rights to develop a pump station at Goat Creek (a significant project) and development of the Naturita Canal is moving forward</p> <p>Overall, there was a great deal of public support for suitability. The Recreational Classification would allow for development of water rights if the Vegetation ORV continues to be protected.</p>

SEGMENT/ Eligibility Report Page Number	BLM ELIGIBILITY CLASSIFICATION	SWRAC RECOMMENDATION	COMMENTS/BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION
15 - Dry Creek Page 59	Wild	Not Suitable	<p>The SWRAC recommended that the segment be found <i>not suitable</i> based upon the following discussion:</p> <p>The area does not receive significant visitation and the terrain protects the canyon to some extent</p> <p>The biggest threats to the segment are oil and gas development (but there has not been much exploration to date)</p> <p>ACEC designation as well as No Surface Occupancy (NSO) stipulations are potential management alternatives for the segment being considered during RMP development</p> <p>Because the creek flows intermittently, the contribution of the segment to the NWSRS is questionable</p> <p>Five miles of private land at the upper end of the segment and three miles of private land between the segment and the San Miguel River, as well as accompanying senior private water rights, could make managing the segment difficult</p> <p>A rough 4WD road runs through the segment, making it unsuitable for classification as <i>Wild</i>.</p>
16 - Naturita Creek Page 62	Scenic	Not Suitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish species for which the Fish ORV was assigned are found primarily within private property at the lower end of the segment and landowners in that portion do not support WSR suitability. While a private landowner (Foley) with property at the upper end of the segment expressed strong support for suitability, an onsite review conducted by BLM staff could not substantiate a Vegetation ORV within the stretch. Another landowner (Lockhart) within the segment has a conservation easement on their property. <p>NOTE: BLM staff conducted an on-site review of the stretch and could not recommend a Vegetation ORV.</p>

SEGMENT/ Eligibility Report Page Number	BLM ELIGIBILITY CLASSIFICATION	SWRAC RECOMMENDATION	COMMENTS/BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION
17 - Saltado Creek Page 64	Wild	Suitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SWRAC acknowledged and concurred with the strong support for a finding of <i>suitable</i> that the segment has received from private land owners.
18 - San Miguel River, Segment 1 Page 66	Recreational	Suitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SWRAC found significant overall support for a finding of <i>Suitable</i> for the segment. While there are concerns regarding uranium and recreational placer mining within the segment, the SWRAC believes that the Recreational Classification would allow for the continuation of these activities.
19 - San Miguel River, Segment 2 Page 70	Wild	Suitable with modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SWRAC found significant support for a finding of <i>Suitable</i>. The natural geography of the segment led the SWRAC to recommend that the segment be shortened to end at the Bennett property in order to protect the landowner's interests at Horsefly Creek, and the corridor extend only to the canyon rims and end at the confluence with Horsefly Creek. The SWRAC considered the overall land health to be of great concern for the segment. While the impact of grazing on the Vegetation ORV is addressed to some extent through the current ACEC and Special Recreation Management Area designations, WSR designation would provide longer lasting protections.

SEGMENT/ Eligibility Report Page Number	BLM ELIGIBILITY CLASSIFICATION	SWRAC RECOMMENDATION	COMMENTS/BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION
20 - San Miguel River, Segment 3 Page 73	Scenic	Suitable for Recreational classification	The SWRAC recommended that the segment be reclassified as Recreational due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CC Ditch and a dirt road that runs parallel to the river • Two BLM campgrounds along the stretch • A significant number of mining claims in the area • The popularity of the segment for recreational gold mining. The SWRAC also recommended that the Bennett property, as well as private land at the lower end of the segment, be excluded from the suitability recommendation.
21 - San Miguel River, Segment 5 Page 76	Recreational	Suitable with modifications	The SWRAC recommended that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The segment length be significantly reduced, beginning downstream from the Richards' property, running the length of The Nature Conservancy property, and terminating at the confluence with Tabeguache Creek. • The boundaries of the protective corridor extend rim to rim and should be delineated by existing developments and natural barriers (such as the state highway).
22 - San Miguel River, Segment 6 Page 79	Recreational	Suitable with modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SWRAC recommended that the segment begin downstream of Umetco Minerals Corporation property and terminate at the confluence with the Dolores River.
23 - Tabeguache Creek, Segment 1 Page 82	Wild	Suitable	The SWRAC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended that the segment begin at the USFS boundary and end one-quarter mile from private property. • Noted that a <i>Wild</i> Classification would complement existing protections in the area (including designation as a specially managed "Area") and provides a good management tool for the BLM.

SEGMENT/ Eligibility Report Page Number	BLM ELIGIBILITY CLASSIFICATION	SWRAC RECOMMENDATION	COMMENTS/BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION
24 - Tabeguache Creek, Segment 2 Page 84	Recreational	Not Suitable	The SWRAC recommended a finding of <i>Not Suitable</i> due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to manage the segment being compromised by significant portions of private land. • Lack of support from private landowners for finding the segment <i>Suitable</i>.
25 - Lower Dolores River Page 88	Scenic	Suitable with modifications	The SWRAC recommended that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The segment be shortened to exclude private property (ending at the Weimer property). • The corridor boundary be modified to protect mining claims and delineated on the east side by the highway and on the west side by a geographic marker such as the canyon rim or other natural feature.
26 - North Fork Mesa Creek Page 91	Scenic	Not Suitable	Following a review by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program that lowered the rarity ranking of the Narrowleaf cottonwood/strappleaf willow/silver buffaloberry plant community to G3, the segment no longer possesses an ORV to support eligibility.
27 - Dolores River, Segment 2 Page 94	Recreational	Suitable with modifications	The SWRAC recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability for the public land portion of the segment (5.3 miles), but not for private land portions (6.2 miles). • Aligning the protective corridor to exclude the Buck Shot Mine and associated ROW. The segment boundary would follow the cliff line if less than one-quarter mile from the river center.

SEGMENT/ Eligibility Report Page Number	BLM ELIGIBILITY CLASSIFICATION	SWRAC RECOMMENDATION	COMMENTS/BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION
28 - Ice Lake Creek, Segment 2 Page 98	Scenic	Not Suitable	The SWRAC recommended that the segment be found Not Suitable based upon the following issues: Mining occurs on the mesa along the northern end of the segment The segment length is extremely short The segment terminates on private land, which could make the area more difficult to manage.
29 - La Sal Creek, Segment 1 Page 100	Recreational	Not Suitable	The SWRAC recommended finding the segment Not Suitable because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive private land would make the segment difficult to manage. • A significant number of private landowners do not support finding the segment Suitable.
30 - La Sal Creek, Segment 2 Page 102	Scenic	Suitable for Recreational classification with modifications	The SWRAC recommended that the segment be found Suitable with the following modifications: Change the Classification from Scenic to Recreational in order to accommodate potential future mining activities and road improvements Shorten the segment to end at and exclude the Cashin Mine.
31 - La Sal Creek, Segment 3 Page 104	Wild	Suitable	The SWRAC recommended that the segment be classified as Wild due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pristine, wild, and remote character of the area. • The critical habitat for native warm water fish provided by the segment.

SEGMENT/ Eligibility Report Page Number	BLM ELIGIBILITY CLASSIFICATION	SWRAC RECOMMENDATION	COMMENTS/BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION
32 - Lion Creek, Segment 2 Page 107	Scenic	Not Suitable	The SWRAC recommended that the segment be found Not Suitable due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The short length • A measure of self-protection afforded by the steep slopes of the corridor • Restricted access from private land • Lack of landowner support for finding the segment Suitable.
33 - Spring Creek Page 109	Recreational	Not Suitable	The SWRAC recommended that the segment be found Not Suitable due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The short length • An extensive amount of interspersed private land that could make the segment difficult to manage • A measure of self-protection already afforded by the steep slopes of the corridor.
34 - Dolores River, Segment 1 SJPLC Draft Land Management Plan, Page D-14	Wild/ Recreational	Wild portion Suitable with modifications	The SWRAC believes that a recommendation of Suitable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complements the Wilderness Study Area designation • Is consistent with other WSR designations for portions of the Dolores River outside of the planning area. In order to avoid interference with mining operations, the SWRAC recommended that the segment begin at the UFO boundary and terminate at the private land boundary (T47N/R18W/Section 31) south of Bedrock, and that the corridor extend from rim to rim or one-quarter mile from the high water mark (whichever measure is less).

F. GUNNISON BASIN STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Gunnison Basin stakeholder process was initiated by the Colorado River Water Conservation District. The stakeholder group contracted with a team of co-facilitators and held a series of public meetings to formulate recommendations regarding WSR suitability for eligible river segments in the Gunnison River Basin, including within the Dominguez-Escalante NCA. Nine meetings pertained to segments within the planning area outside of the NCA.

The stakeholder group was unable to reach a consensus and two sets of recommendations were forwarded to the BLM for consideration. Following are the meeting notes submitted by each group.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP ONE RECOMMENDATIONS

February 16, 2011

Barbara Sharrow
Field Manager, Uncompahgre Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, Colorado 81401

Re: Wild & Scenic River Suitability Evaluation – Gunnison Basin Segments outside of Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area

Dear Ms. Sharrow:

The Gunnison Basin Wild and Scenic Rivers Stakeholder Group is a group of diverse stakeholders that has held ten meetings with 25 – 60 people in attendance at each since October 2010 to develop management plans to guide the Bureau of Land Management's suitability determinations for segments in the Gunnison Basin that BLM has found eligible to become part of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System.

After careful deliberation, the stakeholder group has come to consensus that Deep Creek, the West Fork of Terror Creek, Gunnison River Segment 2 and Roubideau Creek Segment 2 should be found "Not Suitable" for inclusion in the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System. There was no dissent from this final recommendation by participants in the stakeholder group.

Key factors leading to this conclusion for each of these stream segments are listed below; additional information generated by the group's discussion can be found in the attached charts.

Deep Creek:

- The small portion of the creek that is managed by the BLM raised concerns about the BLM's ability to manage it as a Wild & Scenic River.
- Existing management actions by area landowners are protective of the Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV).
- The stream segment is frequently dry.
- Sole-source power lines and access roads currently exist that must be used for year-round operations and maintenance. Future development will likely require future upgrades and/or replacement of this infrastructure.

West Fork of Terror Creek:

- The small portion of the creek that is managed by the BLM raised concerns about the BLM's ability to manage it as a Wild & Scenic River.
- The stream segment is frequently dry. Water is diverted from upstream reservoirs to water right holders of the Leroux Creek Water Users Association. Water is only in the stream segment in the

Gunnison Basin Wild & Scenic Stakeholder Group Report, Page 1 of 3

summer when Terror Ditch and Reservoir Company diverts water through it.

- The stream corridor contains extensive infrastructure related to power lines. A 230 KV transmission line crosses BLM land within the eligible corridor and requires year-round motorized access for operation, maintenance, and repair.
- Potential coal reserves exist in the area, and leases for their development have been issued.

Gunnison River Segment 2:

- The ORV for Gunnison River Segment #2 was endangered fish in the eligibility report; however, this is in error. Therefore there are no ORVs for this segment. Gunnison River Segment #2 is upstream of the Recovery Implementation Program's (for the four endangered fish species of the Upper Colorado River) designated "Critical Habitat" for all of the listed species. Analysis on planned re-operation of the Aspinall Unit is nearing completion with a primary goal of providing adequate flows for recovery of the listed species. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Operation of the Aspinall Unit requires that the Unit be operated to avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of, and assist in the recovery of, the endangered fishes. To avoid jeopardizing means adequate water must continue to flow from the Aspinall Unit through Gunnison River Segment #2 and beyond. Even delisting of all four species would require continued flows deemed adequate for continued self-sustaining populations.
- The small portion of the river corridor that is managed by the BLM raised concerns about the impact on private lands from suitability finding.
- Potential for the river channel to change course exacerbated concerns about impacts to private property and reduced the viability of narrowing the corridor to mitigate concerns (one option discussed).

Roubideau Creek Segment 2:

- The large amount of private land in the corridor raised concerns about the BLM's ability to manage it as a Wild & Scenic River.
- Concerns about the potential impact of a Wild & Scenic suitability finding on grazing permittees' ability to use the area for grazing and transit (critical transit corridor for cattle grazing).
- Utility corridor crossing BLM with power lines and gas pipelines as well as electric distribution service to 10 meters within the corridor.

The stakeholder group held more in-depth discussions on Monitor Creek, Potter Creek and Roubideau Creek Segment 1, including two subcommittee meetings. The group came to unanimous agreement on what conditions need to be maintained in these stream corridors, but did not come to full consensus on what management tools should be applied to maintain these conditions. Additional information collected on each segment by the group can be found in the attached charts.

Conditions to be maintained on Monitor Creek, Potter Creek and Roubideau Creek Segment 1:

- Existing grazing rights, including continued access to important livestock transit corridors to both BLM and Forest Service lands.
- Existing water rights.
- Equipment access for pond maintenance.
- Healthy range and well-managed grazing.
- Healthy vegetation: both vegetation types identified by the BLM as ORV's and other vegetation types, which have improved because of current grazing management practices.
- Diverse and healthy wildlife: both wildlife identified by the BLM as ORV's and other species.

- A sense of wildness, remoteness and naturalness.
- Existing quiet recreation opportunities:
 - Hiking.
 - Horseback riding.
 - Hunting.
- Protection from over-use for recreation and damaging forms of recreation, including effective means to limit access by motorized vehicles.
- Existing healthy stream flows, which include return flows from irrigation and water facilities.

Management tools:

The group agreed that current management has maintained the values listed above and should be continued. However, there was no consensus on what classifications or management tools should be applied to the areas to ensure that this continues. Management tools discussed included Wild & Scenic Suitability, incorporating the corridors into an area classified as "Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)," a "Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)," or "Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)." Group members expressed a preference for management tools that the local BLM office can reconsider with resource management plan revisions over tools that require the maintenance of particular protections until Congress acts (such as Wilderness Study Areas and Wild and Scenic suitability determinations).

Wild & Scenic Suitability

On Wild & Scenic Suitability, the majority of the group (24) indicated that the segments should be found Not Suitable, with two in opposition. Those opposed, which represent environmental advocacy organizations, will submit a separate report detailing why they believe the segments should instead be found Suitable. Key factors in the majority's opinion that the segments should be found Not Suitable include:

- The ORV's are already protected by a combination of current management strategies and the topography of the area. The current management is adequate as evidenced by the ORV's BLM identified in finding the segments eligible
- Concern about potential impacts on water rights.
- Concern about potential impacts on grazing rights.
- On Potter Creek, updated information showed that the vegetation identified by BLM as the segment's sole ORV in the original eligibility report was too common for the vegetation to qualify as an ORV, making the segment ineligible for Wild and Scenic status.
- Roubideau Creek Segment I is already contained within the Camelback Wilderness Study Area and therefore already managed to protect its wilderness qualities.

Alternative Management Tools

The group did not find consensus on whether classifying the stream segments as part of a LWC, SRMA, or ACEC would be an acceptable alternative to Wild & Scenic Suitability. Concerns raised with all of these management options included:

- The area is already sufficiently protected through current BLM management.
- These tools could affect a broader area than the stream corridors the group has been discussing.
- The full implications of these classifications are not yet sufficiently understood by the group.
- The group has not had time to flesh out what use stipulations they would want to recommend along with any of these classifications.

Please review the attached individual segment sheets for detailed information collected from the stakeholders.



The stakeholder group participants appreciate the support provided by BLM staff to help the participants understand the Wild & Scenic Rivers evaluation process.

Sincerely,
Gunnison Basin Wild & Scenic Rivers Stakeholder Group

Billy L. Pease* Western Slope Gold Prospectors Association of America chapter from Olathe	Constantine Hirschfeld* President, Thunder Mountain Wheelers North Fork Snowmobile Club
Larry R. and Wanda K. Boyd* Landowners in Roubideau Segment 1 and grazing permittees in Roubideau Segment 1 and 2, and Potter Creek, and Monitor Creek	 Kergon E. McGuire Terror Ditch and Reservoir Company
Mike Wilson* Thunder Mountain Wheelers	 Eugene M. McGuire Terror Ditch & Reservoir Company
Olen Lund* Delta County Commissioner District #3 <i>Delta County endorses this letter.</i>	Steven R. Lewis* Concerned citizen, Western Colorado Chapter Gold Prospectors Association of America
Betty Oglesby*	Shelby Bear* SCRAC Subgroup
Thomas M Alvey* North Fork Water Conservancy District Delta County Director CRWCD	Charles McMurdy* President, Montrose Ouray and San Miguel Farm Bureau Olathe property owner and farmer
 Chris Treese Colorado River Water Conservation District	Dick Steele, DVM* Western Colorado Chapter of the Gold Prospectors Association of America Colorado Mule Deer Association Colorado Sportsmens Wildlife Fund Western Colorado Sportsmens Council
Eric Trommer* Landowner/farmer on the lower Gunnison and owner of New Leaf Fruit	Art Etter, Engineer* Bowie Resources, LLC

*Permission to list as signatory provided via email or phone.

Signatures continued on following page.

James Graziano* Monitor Mesa Ranch	Max, Julie & Gina Ungerer* Landowners and water rights owners
 Mike Berry Tri-County Water Conservancy District	 Dick Miller My signature represents that of myself, Scott Miller, John and Beth Wool, Kent Davis, Alan Malcolm and Dave Abbott who are all in association with the Escalante Ranch.
Mike Clarke* Grazing permittee	
Robert Gill* Ranch Manager for Bear Ranch, LLC	C. Douglas Atchley* Landowner
Richard Connell* Colorado Farm Bureau	Roger Bentley* Landowner
Chann Fogg* Vice President, Delta County Farm & Livestock Bureau <i>Delta County Farm & Livestock Bureau endorses this letter.</i>	Anna M. Hutchins* Landowner

*Permission to list as signatory provided via email or phone.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP ONE MEETING NOTES

5 - GUNNISON RIVER SEGMENT 2

Eligibility Report Information:

- Classification: Recreational
- ORV: Endangered warm water fish
- Segment Length: .41

Stakeholder comments & questions on BLM information:

- Is this a critical habitat reach for the fish, and are they in that segment?
 - DOW response: this segment does not fall in the critical habitat designated by the USFWS.
- Is there spawning habitat or some other special feature for the endangered fish in this segment?
 - None noted
- Is this a natural channel (river splits around an island at this point)?
 - BLM response: Yes
- Arial photos show water in this segment, with the south channel drier.
- Why no recreation ORV – valuable for canoeing & boating.
 - BLM response: not “best of best,” usual take-out is above segment because of downstream dam.
- How wide is the island?
 - BLM response: Approx. ¼ mile

TABLE 8 - GUNNISON RIVER, SEGMENT 2 STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

ORV NEEDS		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
1	Fish – flows	Heartland diversion dam downstream.		Being rebuilt to allow fish passage.	Endangered Species Act already provides protections for the endangered fish.
2	Fish – other threats	Fishing		Northern Pike coming will cause problems through predation.	

ORV NEEDS		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
3	General	* Electrical services & access roads on south side within ¼ mile. Utility service requires year-round access for operation, maintenance & repair. Vegetation trimming and/or road repair may be required to maintain t-line and access ROW's. * Hunting waterfowl	Replacement, upgrade or expansion of utilities within corridor.		

7 - MONITOR CREEK

Eligibility Report Information

Classification: Wild

ORV: Vegetation: ~~riparian narrowleaf cottonwood/strappleaf willow/silver buffaloberry riparian forest forests, Fremont cottonwood/skunkbush sumac riparian woodland and coyote willow riparian shrublands~~

Segment Length – 9.42; 100% BLM-managed

Stakeholder comments & questions on BLM information

Some stakeholders would like to see Recreation and Wildlife added as ORV's. BLM requested scientific data to support these ORVs.

Question how the segment can be “Wild” if an upstream diversion is key to creating its character.

No current Coal or Oil & Gas leases

Vegetation ORVs narrowleaf cottonwood/strappleaf willow/silver buffaloberry and Fremont cottonwood/skunkbush sumac were removed through BLM updated information.

A-ranking occurrence of Sandbar willow (aka Coyote Willow) remains.

Subgroup agreed on the conditions needed to be maintained in the stream corridor, but did not come to agreement on what management tools should be applied to maintain these conditions.

TABLE 9 - MONITOR CREEK STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

	ORV NEEDS	CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
1	Wildness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting • Hiking 	Potential for trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep canyon separates creek from private land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjacent landowner is in the process of establishing a conservation easement. • Both sides of creek in Citizen-proposed Wilderness area. • Trail compatible with “Wild” • Colorado Natural Heritage Program – Potential Conservation Area
2	Flows	Upstream flows diverted to reservoir (100 yrs old).	Same as now	Reservoir/ irrigation impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May benefit ORV by regulating flows, preventing scouring. • Not clear what impact would be if diversion was stopped. 	
3		Grazing – there is a permit	Same as now		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability would only affect grazing if it was shown to degrade ORV. • Would affect range improvements – increasing evidence of human activity could have an impact on the “Wild” classification. • Related trails would be unaffected by suitability with “Wild” classification.
4	Habitat quality			Russian knapweed problem (least severe of Monitor, Potter, Roubideau).	BLM sprays to control.
5	General	Water rights?			If ORV depends on management of adjacent ranch, that puts BLM in a box.

8 - POTTER CREEK**Eligibility Report Information**

Classification: Wild

ORV: ~~Vegetation: narrowleaf cottonwood/strawleaf willow-silver buffaloberry riparian forest~~

Segment Length – 9.82; 100% BLM-managed

Stakeholder comments & questions on BLM information

Some stakeholders would like to see Recreation and Wildlife added as ORV's. BLM requested scientific data to support these ORVs.

Does the creek cross private land near the confluence?

No – BLM verified after the meeting.

Grazing permittees utilize the watering ponds in this area and they must have access to maintain the ponds with equipment

Details on mineral leases – No current leases

How close is the jeep/ all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trail?

From Edd Franz (BLM) after the meeting: The jeep trail between 7N Mesa and Potter Creek gets within 0.24 mile of Potter Creek. This should not be an issue because the "buffer" lands do not have to be exactly 0.25 mile on each side of the stream. The land just must average to 320 acres per mile.

Vegetation ORV removed from eligibility by BLM update.

Subgroup agreed on the conditions needed to be maintained in the stream corridor, but did not come to agreement on what management tools should be applied to maintain these conditions.

TABLE 10 - POTTER CREEK STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

ORV NEEDS		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
1	Wildness/ habitat			Used to be a jeep/log road; closed 25 years ago at DOW recommendation.	Citizen-proposed wilderness on both sides. Colorado Natural Heritage Program - Roubideau Creek Potential Conservation Area
2	Flows	Water rights?		No diversions or impoundments	One individual suggested dividing Potter Creek into two segments because there doesn't appear to be water rights above Monitor Creek.
3	Habitat quality			Russian knapweed problem	BLM sprays to control.
4		Grazing			
5		Hunting			
6		Hiking/ Recreation		Jeep/ATV trail	ATV Club has adoption the trail for maintenance

10 - ROUBIDEAU CREEK, SEGMENT I

Eligibility Report Information

- Classification: Wild
- ORV: Recreational (non-mechanized), Wildlife (leopard frog, bighorn sheep), Cultural (inscription panel, rock art), Vegetation (Fremont cottonwood/skunkbush sumac riparian woodland; skunkbush sumac/sandbar willow riparian shrubland)
- Segment length: 10.74 miles; 93% BLM

Stakeholder comments & questions on BLM information

- How do those landowners feel about the potential for their part of the stream to be determined “suitable” for Wild & Scenic status?
- Wanda Boyd requests her land be removed from any Wild and Scenic consideration.
- Is there a chunk of private land in the middle of the segment as well?
- No – BLM verifies
- Would BLM seek to swap or acquire private land on a segment if it was determined suitable? Yes per BLM
- Vegetation ORV Fremont Cottonwood/skunkbush removed per BLM update
- Subgroup agreed on the conditions needed to be maintained in the stream corridor, but did not come to agreement on what management tools should be applied to maintain these conditions.

TABLE 11 - ROUBIDEAU CREEK, SEGMENT ONE STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

	ORV NEEDS	CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
1	Wildness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunting • Fishing • Hiking 			Within Camelback Wilderness Study Area (WSA): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides surface disturbance protection. • Does not provide protection specifically for ORV's. • BLM found “not suitable” for designation as Wilderness; no process for revising.
2	Flows	Large diversion upstream.		Sometimes stream goes dry in places.	
	Habitat quality			Russian knapweed problem (most severe among Monitor, Potter & Roubideau).	BLM spraying done on horseback because of WSA restrictions.

	ORV NEEDS	CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
3	Cultural preservation				Nominated for National Register of Historic Places <i>(would require that any federal or federally funded project take into account potential impacts to places deemed eligible to be on the National Register of Historic Places & give opportunity to comment by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation).</i>
4		Access Roads		Main road up Roubideau terminates for public use just up from the confluence; good condition.	
5		Grazing			

II - ROUBIDEAU CREEK SEGMENT 2

Eligibility Report Information:

- Classification: Scenic
- ORV: Wildlife (leopard frog, bighorn sheep). ~~Vegetation (Fremont cottonwood/ skunkbush sumac riparian woodland)~~
- Segment Length: 7.59 miles, 45.5% BLM managed

Stakeholder comments & questions on BLM information:

- Less than 50% BLM – potential management problems.
- Why does segment go so much on private land?
 - BLM response: ORV there.
- Frogs may not be so rare – noisy + lots of tadpoles seen locally.
- Bighorn sheep re-introduced; desert bighorn – not mountain; presumed native b/c rock art, but Fremont rock art sometimes depicts game species that weren't local to the area where they were drawn.
- Riparian vegetation not unusual
 - Vegetation ORV dropped by BLM after information update

TABLE 12 - ROUBIDEAU CREEK, SEGMENT TWO STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

ORV NEEDS		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
1	Scenic classification	Utility corridor crossing BLM (345kV & 115kV power lines, and Trans-Colorado Natural Gas pipeline). Also, electric distribution service to 10 meters within corridor. All utilities require year-round access for operation, maintenance & repair. Vegetation trimming and/or road repair may be required to maintain t-line and access ROW's.	Replacement, upgrade or expansion of utilities within corridor.		
		Gas line	Replacement, upgrade or expansion of utilities within corridor.		
2	Wildlife/ Vegetation Habitat			Wilderness study area (WSA) upstream from segment.	
		Irrigation diversion upstream		Often no flow in late summer, fall.	
				Buttermilk Cr near Roubideau – water for bighorns to drink.	
				Springs and runoff provide moisture that supports frogs, vegetation.	

ORV NEEDS		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
				predation – if controlled herons & raccoons, would help.	
3	General	Cattle grazing in canyon: 1 day spring, 1 day fall; 900 transit canyon to access other grazing areas – vital for access; started 1882.		Not pleasant for recreation while cattle are going through.	BLM: Scenic classification was made with road considered; suitability with this classification wouldn't close the road.
				Cattle don't stay on road; drift through whole canyon.	
		Sheep on top, South + East, in winter.			

12 - DEEP CREEK

Information:

- Classification - Scenic
- ORV - Green-back cutthroat trout
- Segment Length – 2.55 mi.; BLM Admin Length - .58 mi.
- DOW recommended any stream with pure cutthroat be an ORV. Technique to differentiate greenback cutthroat from Colorado cutthroat... are genetic differences, only recently figured out... Original paper may have miss-labeled as greenback.
- Viable population upstream on USFS land

TABLE 13 - DEEP CREEK STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

KEY CONDITIONS TO MAINTAIN ORV		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
I	Fish are there	Limited fishing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only places fish survive is in isolated pools on BLM stretch. • Only occasional hitchhikers make it down to BLM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it's not broke, why fix it?

KEY CONDITIONS TO MAINTAIN ORV		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More viable population upstream. 	
2	Limit other species detrimental to Cutthroat			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition from brook trout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider going downstream to prevent brook trout from going upstream.
3	Water Quantity – running water for longer period of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irr. Diversion up-stream • Ranch has 1933 decree 	Irrigation Diversion changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creek is dried up 3 months of the year. • Water is the limiting factor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-share a project to build a new, fish-friendly diversion. • A public / private partnership for storage upstream could provide water for irrigation + fish. • Bear Ranch cost-share program with USFS; can BLM participate • BLM & water user agreements • In Stream Flow (ISF) appropriation • WSR Suitability - Permanency is important – uncertainty about future management decisions. • With Suitability, BLM would manage to protect the fish & keep it from slipping from “Scenic” classification but can’t do much without water.

	KEY CONDITIONS TO MAINTAIN ORV	CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Suitability, BLM mgmt may not be very different but would force agencies to look at any actions that may harm the ORV
4		Any pure cutthroat regardless of what kind, DOW considers important to conserve		Question about if it is greenback cutthroat, and if so, if planted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FWS “threatened” • Protected under ESA • Broad USFS guidance • Angling regulations • Ranch and water use of local water users are key factors in protection • DOW to summarize regulations and for group
5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently leased for Oil & Gas – per BLM • No current coal leases – per BLM 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “No surface occupancy” would be easy to directionally drill. • Suitability - would require a buffer around the stream in the case of oil & gas leasing. – Potential for litigation?
6		Sole-source power line crosses creek within 200-250’ of BLM river segment, and uses an existing access road on BLM for year-round operation, maintenance & repair. Vegetation	<p>Additional houses possible that would require more service.</p> <p>Future replacement or upgrade of utilities within corridor may be necessary to</p>		

KEY CONDITIONS TO MAINTAIN ORV		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ASSETS	POLICY/MANAGEMENT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
		trimming and/or road repair (approx. 1 mile) may be needed to maintain the t-line and access ROW's.	accommodate load growth.		
7		Road crossing Deep Creek/ approx. 1 mile of access on BLM	Road maintenance if required to maintain access		
8		Livestock Grazing			

13 - WEST FORK OF TERROR CREEK

Eligibility Report Information:

- Classification: Scenic
- ORV: Native Colorado Trout (may be threatened Greenback Cutthroats)
- Segment Length: 1.21 miles, 39.2% managed by BLM

Stakeholder comments & questions on BLM information:

- Request for details on when and where trout were found in the creek
 - DOW Response: Sampling records confirm the presence of cutthroat trout as early as 1978 & as recent as 2010
- Fish may be a non-threatened species of Colorado Cutthroat Trout. Most sampling has occurred on USFS land.
- If BLM only manages a broken 39.2% of the segment, could it manage that? Suggest not considering it b/c of this issue.
- Grand Mesa Canal Headgate #4, mentioned in eligibility report, has never been built – it is a conditional decree.
- Two small impoundments Rex and Holy Terror Reservoirs, are upstream from the reach; their stored water is not released through the West Fork of Terror Creek, but instead the water is diverted into the Leroux Creek drainage for irrigation use by the Leroux Creek Water Users Association.

TABLE 14 - WEST FORK TERROR CREEK STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

ORV + CLASSIFICATION CONDITION & NEEDS		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ ASSETS	POLICY/MGMT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
1	Fish ORV: Flows	Senior water rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above segment: Overland Ditch, Leroux Creek Water Users Association • Below segment: Terror Ditch, Holy Bee, Fawcett 		Several years the creek is dry at the confluence with the East Fork of Terror Creek. Bowie Resources has data back to 1983 showing flows ranging from spring flood (220 cfs) to 0 in the fall.	Endangered Species Act already provides protections for the endangered fish. Noted at 1/10 mtg: ESA is not valid for these fish that are not threatened or endangered.
2	Scenic Classification	Roads: 1.15 miles unsurfaced, 0.90 single-lane county rd		Segment can be easily accessed by road. There is currently no public access to adjacent road system.	1/10/11 Mtg: Water is diverted to West Fork Terror Creek that is not a natural drainage.
		230 KV transmission line crosses creek on BLM and requires year-round motorized access for operation, maintenance & repair. Vegetation trimming and/or road repair may be required to maintain t-line and access ROW's.	Replacement, upgrade or expansion of utilities within corridor.	More industrial infrastructure in corridor than indicated in eligibility report.	
		Dilapidated cabin and several small outbuildings located within corridor.	Future permanent and/or seasonal residence within corridor	Existing structures not noted in eligibility report.	

ORV + CLASSIFICATION CONDITION & NEEDS		CURRENT USES & VALUES	POTENTIAL FUTURE USES	CURRENT PROBLEMS/ ASSETS	POLICY/MGMT TOOLS – OPTIONS AND IMPACT
3	General	Roads cross the stream at two locations within the corridor. The county road crosses the stream over a culvert and the unsurfaced road crosses the stream with an unimproved 'at-grade' ford.		Stream crossing not noted in eligibility report.	
		Coal exploration drill hole and water quality monitoring wells currently permitted and scheduled to be installed in 2011	Use of water quality monitoring wells will be required for 10-15 years	Additional industrial use in the corridor not noted in eligibility report.	
		Cattle grazing			All species whether listed as endangered, threatened, or sensitive species are protected under mine permitting processes.
		Fishing		Stream is narrow and brushy limiting fishing opportunity.	
		Mining – coal exploration drill holes.	Potential coal reserves in corridor; leased.	Significant economic impact to local economy if coal reserves are unable to be mined.	
		Oil & gas leases.	Oil & gas devel.		

STAKEHOLDER GROUP TWO RECOMMENDATIONS

Audubon Colorado • Center for Native Ecosystems
Colorado Environmental Coalition • Colorado Mountain Club • Colorado Wild
San Juan Citizens Alliance • Sheep Mountain Alliance • The Wilderness Society
Western Colorado Congress • NWWSEC/NFRIA/WSERC Conservation Center

c/o The Wilderness Society
1660 Wynkoop #850
Denver, Colorado 80202

February 22, 2011

Barbara Sharrow, Manager
Uncompahgre Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
Montrose, Colorado

Dear Ms. Sharrow,

The ten undersigned organizations participated in the recently concluded ad hoc stakeholders process reviewing management recommendations and potential suitability of seven stream segments for possible inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (stream segments previously listed by the BLM as eligible for consideration for such protection—*Final Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report for the BLM Uncompahgre Planning Area, June 2010*). These organizations either participated directly in the stakeholders process or were represented by participants, consulting with and advising those representatives throughout the process.

Our organizations joined this effort in good faith that open and fair consideration would be given, by all participants, to the option of a wild & scenic suitability finding for at least some of the stream segments. While that openness was not broadly forthcoming among the participating stakeholders, our representatives did present detailed information on the values of, and need for protection for, select streams. We hope that information and our perspectives contributed positively to the discussion. We also appreciate very much the efforts of a few stakeholders, outside our delegation, in their pursuit of a greater level of agreement on at least some streams.

In large part because of the refusal of other stakeholders to even consider the possibility of a suitability finding for any stream, the group reached no consensus agreement on recommendations to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). While a letter signed by some of the stakeholders, opposing any suitability findings, has been sent to the BLM as the so-called majority recommendations, that letter does not represent the full group of stakeholders. **There was no consensus.**

Correspondingly, we respectfully offer our collective recommendations regarding potential suitability findings, and protective management, for the seven stream segments. These recommendations build on suitability comments our organizations submitted to the BLM in August 2010. They are supplemented with additional, updated, information and with new perspectives arising from the recent stakeholders discussions.

We thank you for carefully considering the details of these recommendations as you develop the range of alternatives for the pending resource management plan and, ultimately, as you settle on a final management plan.

The BLM's eligibility report was a very helpful starting point in the preparation of our original suitability comments and for our continued discussions of these streams with the BLM and with others. The level of detail provided, the careful research, and the professional presentation of that eligibility report have contributed to thoughtful review and discussion of these important streams.

Meanwhile, it is significant to note that Colorado has only one stream included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. We trust that it is obvious that this is not because of a lack of outstanding streams in this state. Indeed, the BLM's eligibility report confirms that a long list of remarkable streams and stream corridors warrant special consideration and strong protection, whether under provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or otherwise.

Stream segments

Gunnison River Segment 2

.41 mile; Recreational; Fish

This regionally significant river warrants strong and enduring protection as an important recreational opportunity, as the hydrologic heart of unique adjacent public lands, and as essential habitat for at least two endangered species of native fish, along with three other species of ancient native fish that are imperiled, primarily because of loss of habitat or changes in river flows. (All these values are documented in the BLM's eligibility report.)

Federal ownership of the river segment is 100%. While only 66.5% of lands in the river corridor are federally owned, all those lands are on one side of the river, simplifying the implementation of protective management for those lands.

The primary need for the identified outstandingly remarkable values—particularly for the native fish—are reliable and seasonally natural flows of water in the Gunnison River. Other federal programs—primarily the Endangered Species Act—and evolving federal management efforts—including re-operation the Aspinall Unit dams upstream—contribute, or will contribute, to the reliability of those critical-habitat flows.

It therefore is not necessary to apply a finding of wild & scenic suitability to this portion of the Gunnison River, *so long as* those other federal measures are implemented and properly maintained. If those measures are either removed or fail to protect the native fish and their habitat, the BLM should reconsider a finding of suitability in future planning processes.

Monitor Creek

9.42 miles; Wild; Vegetation (cottonwood/riparian)

This stream is an important feature flowing through the heart of federal lands with wilderness character and wilderness characteristics, which are included in a citizens' wilderness proposal. The stream is also associated with national forest lands upstream that have been congressionally designated for protection of wilderness values. These wilderness values should be considered and protected through strong protective management for this stream and its corridor.

The BLM's eligibility report's preliminary classification of this stream segment as wild affirms those wilderness characteristics and values, and further warrants strong protection for the stream and corridor.

Protection of this stream will benefit private lands downstream and will help ensure continued healthy streamflow and water quality contribution to the Gunnison River.

In addition to the outstandingly remarkable values identified in the BLM's eligibility report (vegetation), the BLM should also identify and protect the unique and outstanding wildlife and recreation values found along this stream.

The landscape surrounding Monitor Creek is naturally contiguous with, and an essential ("regionally important") component of, the wildlife habitat (and Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV)) identified by the BLM for nearby Roubideau Creek (*desert bighorn sheep*). The features, condition, and importance of this wildlife habitat along Monitor Creek are of importance equal to that found along Roubideau Creek.

Recreation opportunities found in and near the Monitor Creek corridor correspond to the general wilderness character and wilderness characteristics for the area—specifically outstanding opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. While this type of recreation opportunity is slightly different from the recreational ORV identified by the BLM for Roubideau Creek (that ORV based primarily in the popularity of that stream corridor), the version found along Monitor Creek is an outstanding recreational opportunity nonetheless. Indeed, the more primitive and solitude-preserving recreation opportunities noted here for Monitor Creek are also present in Roubideau Creek, which is included, stream and corridor, in the Roubideau (Camel Back) Wilderness Study Area, thus necessarily defined by those same backcountry recreation opportunities.

Meanwhile, a finding of wild & scenic suitability for Monitor Creek—a finding most directly applicable to the lands in the stream corridor—will provide highly reliable and enduring form of protection for the continued health of the rare plant communities identified in the BLM's eligibility report (*narrowleaf cottonwood/strappleaf willow/silver buffaloberry riparian forest*).

Federal ownership of 100% of this stream segment, and of 96.2% of corridor lands along the stream simplify the implementation of protective management through a finding of wild & scenic suitability. The 104.9 acres of private land within the stream corridor are actually separate from the stream, further simplifying protective management, especially if that management were applied specifically to the federal lands.

We recommend that the full length of the Monitor Creek segment be found suitable, applicable at least to the federal lands in the stream corridor. The stream's outstandingly remarkable values should be expanded to include recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat.

Potter Creek

9.82 miles; Wild; Vegetation (*cottonwood/riparian*)

This stream is an important feature associated with adjacent lands with wilderness character and characteristics, which are included in a citizens' wilderness proposal. The stream is also associated with national forest lands upstream that have been congressionally designated for protection of wilderness values. These wilderness values should be considered and protected through strong protective management for this stream and its corridor.

The BLM's eligibility report's preliminary classification of this stream segment as wild affirms those wilderness characteristics and values, and further warrants strong protection for the stream and corridor.

Protection of this stream will benefit private lands downstream and will help ensure continued healthy streamflow and water quality contribution to the Gunnison River.

In addition to the outstandingly remarkable values originally identified in the BLM's eligibility report (*vegetation*), the BLM should also identify and protect the unique and outstanding wildlife and recreation values found along this stream.

The landscape surrounding Potter Creek is naturally contiguous with, and an essential ("regionally important") component of, the wildlife habitat (and ORV) identified by the BLM for adjacent Roubideau Creek (*desert bighorn sheep*). The features, condition, and importance of that wildlife habitat along Potter Creek is of importance equal to that found along Roubideau Creek.

Recreation opportunities found in and near the Potter Creek corridor correspond to the general wilderness character and wilderness characteristics for the area—specifically outstanding opportunities for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. While this type of recreation opportunity is slightly different from the recreational ORV identified by the BLM for Roubideau Creek (that ORV based primarily in the popularity of that stream corridor), it is an outstanding recreational opportunity nonetheless. Indeed, the more primitive and solitude-preserving recreation opportunities noted here for Potter Creek are also present in Roubideau Creek. Roubideau Creek and its corridor are included in the Roubideau (Camel Back) Wilderness Study Area, which is necessarily defined by those same backcountry recreation opportunities.

Meanwhile, the BLM's decision to remove the one outstandingly remarkable value originally identified in the agency's eligibility report is in error. The BLM's rather arbitrary distinction between a classification as critically imperiled globally (G1) and vulnerable throughout its range (G2) is not well founded. Glibly stated, rare is rare, and vulnerable is vulnerable.

Stated a bit more thoughtfully, a plant community that is currently vulnerable throughout its range warrants the highest possible level of protection in each of its occurrences, lest damage from human activity, climate change, or other harmful factors translate vulnerable to imperiled. The best way to avoid plant community failures in the future is an active protection in the present. A finding of eligibility, and accompanying protective management, is an appropriate and timely tool for this plant community.

In any case, a finding of wild & scenic suitability for Potter Creek—a finding most directly applicable to the lands in the stream corridor—will provide a highly reliable and enduring form of protection for the continued health of the rare plant communities identified in the BLM's eligibility report (*narrowleaf cottonwood/strawleaf willow/silver buffaloberry riparian forest*).

Federal ownership of 100% of this stream segment, and of 98.5% of corridor lands along the stream simplify the implementation of protective management through a finding of wild & scenic suitability. The 44.3 acres of private land are located at the far lower end of the stream segment, further simplifying protective management, especially if that management were applied specifically to the federal lands.

We recommend that the full length of the Potter Creek be found suitable, applicable at least to the federal lands in the stream corridor. The stream's outstandingly remarkable values should continue to include the highlighted vegetation communities, and they should be expanded to include recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat.

Roubideau Creek Segment I

10.71 miles; Wild; Recreational, Wildlife, Cultural, Vegetation

This stream is an important feature flowing through and enhancing lands with wilderness character and characteristics, both within the long-standing Roubideau (Camel Back) Wilderness Study Area and in the larger citizens' wilderness proposal of the same name. The stream is also associated with

national forest lands upstream that have been congressionally designated for protection of wilderness values. These wilderness values should be considered and protected through strong protective management for this stream and its corridor.

The BLM's eligibility report's preliminary classification of this stream segment as wild affirms those wilderness characteristics and values, and further warrants strong protection for the stream and corridor.

Protection of this stream will benefit private lands downstream and will help ensure continued healthy streamflow and water quality contribution to the Gunnison River.

A finding of wild & scenic suitability for Roubideau Creek Segment 1—a finding most directly applicable to the lands in the stream corridor—will provide a highly reliable and enduring protection for the continued health of the ORVs identified in the BLM's eligibility report, including: rare plant communities (*narrowleaf cottonwood/strawleaf willow/silver buffaloberry riparian forest*); wildlife (*northern leopard frog, desert bighorn sheep*); cultural; and recreational (*primitive and non-mechanical exploration and exercise*).

Federal ownership of 93% of this stream segment, and of 94.8% of the land in the stream corridor simplifies the effective implementation of protective management.

We recommend that the full length of the Roubideau Creek Segment 1 be found suitable, applicable at least to the federal lands in the corridor.

Roubideau Creek Segment 2

The continued health of this stream segment is an important community and ecological priority, and the BLM's future management of its lands along that stream should ensure the continued vibrancy of the outstanding wildlife and vegetation values found there.

The relatively low percentage of federal land ownership along the stream and in the stream corridor (45.5%, 60.2%) makes management under a finding of wild & scenic suitability difficult. Other protective designations and measures should instead be used for Roubideau Creek Segment 2.

Deep Creek

The continued health of this stream segment is an important community and ecological priority, and the BLM's future management of its lands along that stream should ensure the continued vibrancy of the outstanding wildlife and vegetation values found there.

In particular, the critical rarity of greenback cutthroat trout warrants the highest level of protective management, especially management and cooperative measures to ensure reliable and seasonally natural stream flows.

The relatively low percentage of federal land ownership along the stream and in the stream corridor (22.7%, 15.8%) makes management under a finding of wild & scenic suitability difficult. Other protective designations and measures should instead be used for Deep Creek, *so long as* those other methods continue to successfully protect the trout and its habitat.

West Fork Terror Creek

The continued health of this stream segment is an important community and ecological priority, and the BLM's future management of its lands along that stream should ensure the continued vibrancy of the outstanding wildlife and vegetation values found there.

The relatively low percentage of federal land ownership along the stream and in the stream corridor (39.2%, 47.5%) makes management under a finding of wild & scenic suitability difficult. Other protective designations and measures should instead be used for West Fork Terror Creek, *so long as* those other methods continue to successfully protect the trout and its habitat.

Summary

The undersigned organizations recommend that the BLM reach a finding of suitability, and implement corresponding strong protective management measures for:

- Monitor Creek
- Potter Creek
- Roubideau Creek Segment 1

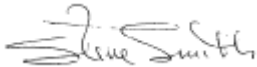
The undersigned organizations recommend that the BLM implement the strongest possible protective management measures, other than a finding of wild & scenic suitability for:

- Gunnison River Segment 2
- Roubideu Creek Segment 2
- Deep Creek
- West Fork Terror Creek

Thank you again for your careful consideration of these comments and recommendations, as complement to the thorough research and review the BLM has already applied to these important streams and corridors.

Please let us know any way in which we can clarify these recommendations, expand on them, or assist with securing their implementation in the BLM's protective management of these streams.

Sincerely,



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TABLE 15 - SUITABLE SEGMENTS IN THE PLANNING AREA

SUITABLE SEGMENT	TOTAL SEGMENT MILES	TOTAL BLM MILES	TOTAL CORRIDOR ACRES	BLM LAND ACRES	RECOMMENDED CLASSIFICATION	OUTSTANDINGLY REMARKABLE VALUES
Monitor Creek	9.4	9.4	2,540	2,540	Wild	Vegetation
Potter Creek	9.8	9.8	2,810	2,810	Wild	Fish, Vegetation
Roubideau Creek, Segment 1	10.0	10.0	2,680	2,680	Wild	Recreational, Wildlife, Cultural, Vegetation
Beaver Creek	14.3	14.2	4,170	3,640	Recreational	Vegetation
Saltado Creek	5.6	4.1	1,640	1,340	Wild	Vegetation
San Miguel River, Segment 1	27.2	17.3	8,360	6,680	Recreational	Scenic, Recreational, Wildlife, Historic, Vegetation, Paleontology
San Miguel River, Segment 2	4.0	4.0	1,100	1,100	Wild	Scenic, Recreational, Wildlife, Vegetation
San Miguel River, Segment 3	4.5	4.5	1,350	1,350	Recreational	Recreational, Fish, Wildlife, Vegetation
San Miguel River, Segment 5	7.5	1.3	2,340	1,740	Recreational	Recreational, Fish, Historic, Vegetation
San Miguel River, Segment 6	2.1	2.1	390	390	Recreational	Recreational, Fish, Historic, Vegetation
Tabeguache Creek, Segment 1	3.4	3.4	1,010	1,010	Wild	Vegetation
Lower Dolores River	4.2	4.2	630	630	Scenic	Scenic, Recreational, Geologic, Fish, Wildlife
Dolores River, Segment 1	8.7	8.7	1,950	1,950	Wild	Recreational, Scenery, Fish, Wildlife, Geology, Ecology, Archaeology
Dolores River, Segment 2	5.3	5.3	1,230	1,230	Recreational	Scenic, Recreational, Geologic, Fish, Wildlife, Vegetation
La Sal Creek, Segment 2	3.3	3.3	790	790	Recreational	Fish, Vegetation
La Sal Creek, Segment 3	3.4	3.4	800	800	Wild	Scenic, Recreational, Fish, Cultural, Vegetation

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Congress declares that the established national policy of dams and other construction at appropriate sections of the rivers of the United States needs to be complemented by a policy that would preserve other selected rivers or sections thereof in their free-flowing condition to protect the water quality of such rivers and to fulfill other vital national conservation purposes.

Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, October 2, 1968

